

## General Introduction

### The language and its people

The Bafut language is spoken mainly in the Bafut kingdom in Mezam Division of the North West province of the Republic of Cameroon. Bafut covers an area of 425 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 85,000 people. The about 85,000 inhabitants live in the 38 villages and quarters that make up the kingdom. However the total number of native speakers of the Bafut language scattered in other parts of the country (and the world) is estimated at about 100,000 people. The Bafut people are historically of Tikar origin. Tikar here is to be taken as an ethnonym and not as a linguistically distinct group. The movements of the Bafut people to the present site in the Grassfields region of Cameroon can be traced back to the 18th century wave of migration when the Tikar People, driven away by wars and harsh weather conditions, started moving southwards from the areas of Banyo and Tibati. The group that now forms Bafut first stopped at Ndop in Mezam Division and then moved again to the present site.

The Bafut people refer to themselves and their language as Bifî. The name *Bafut* is an administrative appellation and I will continue to use it in this book in order to be consistent with political, administrative, religious and language-related documents existing on the language and the people. The Bafut language has two regional and two social dialects. The regional dialects are (a) a peripheral dialect spoken in the hilly villages situated at the periphery of the kingdom such as Bawum, Mambu'u, Mankaa, Mbebelli and Mankwi; (b) a central dialect spoken in the more central part of the kingdom by villages in the immediate vicinity of the king's palace generally referred to as múmèlá'à. The differences between these two dialects are most prominent at the level of pronunciation but much less so at the lexical and structural levels. The few differences I could identify are presented in Tables I and II below.

Table I. Phonological differences between the central and peripheral dialects

Sound alternation	Central dialect	Peripheral dialect	Gloss
by/bw	fɪbjè	fɪbwè	'fish'
m/ŋ	ʃùmô	ʃwùŋô	'pull/draw/drag'
ʃ/s	àʃwɪmbàŋ	àsɰwɪmbàŋ	'cone (of palm nuts)'
l/r	ɲjəlɛ	ɲjèrɛ	'thief'
t/tw	tû	twû	'pay (vt)'
zj/z	zjàndâ	jàndâ	'roof'
z/ʒ	zĩ	ʒĩ	'come'
ŋ/n	múŋwí	múnwí	'knife'

Table II. Lexical differences between the central and peripheral dialects

<u>Central dialect</u>	<u>Peripheral dialect</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ɲdzɪ'ɪ	múndzù	Groundnuts (Peanuts)

It should be pointed out that these differences are gradually spreading into the two dialectal regions such that one could find a speaker from one region using the two forms interchangeably.

The social dialects attested in Bafut are (a) a court dialect spoken mostly by the royal family or anyone associated (by social position or otherwise) with the royal family. (b) a mainstream/common/popular dialect spoken by non-members of the royal family. Understandably, the mainstream dialect comprises the two regional dialects along with their phonetic/lexical differences. At the phonetic level, the court dialect is very similar to the central regional dialect in respect of segmental units but as far as rhythm is concerned, the court dialect is delivered/rendered at a much more slower pace than any of the regional dialects. There is also a noticeable difference between the court dialect and the mainstream dialect with regard to vocabulary and at times structure. Because the court dialect is by its nature exclusive, it is hard for non-members of the royal family (such as the present author) to have access to data. Table III illustrates some of the common lexical items of the court dialect that have (inadvertently) reached the general public. These lexical items are used to refer to objects and actions associated with the king of the Bafuts.

Table III: Lexical differences between the court and mainstream dialects

Court dialect	Mainstream dialect	Gloss
ànô	ñdôŋ	‘drinking horn/cup’
ñtsá’â	mìkòrì	‘feet’
àkóò	àtʃúgì	‘staple dish of the Bafuts’
mù’û	dʒî	‘eat’
tʃû	yàâ	‘speak/announce’
bwê	kwô	‘die’

In addition to these dialects of Bafut, there is another speech form used by princes, princesses and probably the king of Bafut. While the royal dialect is used by members of the royal family and anyone associated to it by social rank for instance, this speech form is used exclusively by the princes and princesses. The verses of the Bafut ethnic (village Anthem) (Appendix A) are probably from this speech form. It is hard to associate this speech form to the Bafut language since the two bear virtually no similarities (except prosody).

Other languages spoken in the Bafut kingdom are (ordered according to numerical strength): Pidgin English, English, Hausa, French. Isolated ethnic groups speaking other Cameroonian languages are also represented in the Kingdom.

### Linguistic classification

Bafut falls under the Niger-Kordofanian phylum which is one of the four major language phyla in Africa. It is a Grassfields Bantu language belonging to the Benue-Congo family of the Niger-Kordofanian Phylum. Within the Benue-Congo family, Bafut belongs to the Ngemba group of Eastern Grassfields Bantu languages. Welmers (1971) includes Bafut under the more general groups Niger-Congo and Benue. Jacquot and Richardson (1956) classify Bafut under the Nkom group. Voorhoeve (1971) in his classification of Mbam-Nkam languages classifies Bafut under the Ngemba group. Stallcup (1977) divides Bantu languages of the Grassfields zone into two groups: Western Grassfields and Mbam-Nkam. In this classification, Bafut falls under the mbam-Nkam group. Fig. I below illustrates the division of Grassfields Bantu languages into Eastern Grassfields and Mbam-Nkam.

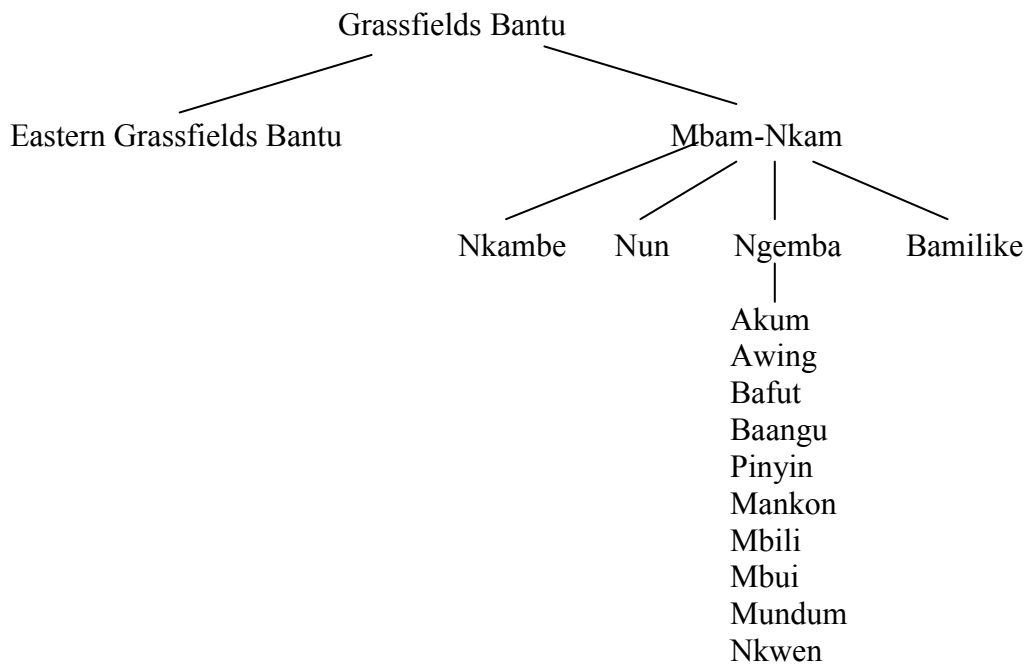


Fig. I Mbam-Nkam Grassfields Bantu languages

(Voorhoeve 1971)

A generally accepted classification of the Benue-Congo languages is that of Williamson (1971). In her subclassification of the Benue-Congo languages Williamson classifies Bafut under the Ngemba group which includes five language types:

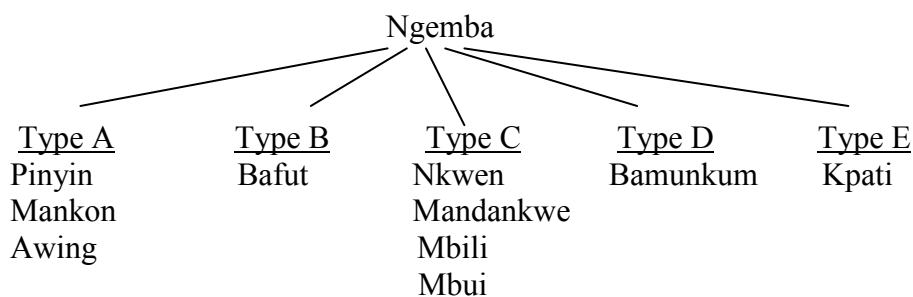


Fig II: Ngemba languages

For the present study, the classification made available by the Grassfields Bantu Working Group (GBWG) which is the most recent and very revealing will be adopted. The GBWG gives the following four divisions of the languages considered Bantu languages spoken in the Grassfields zone of the Republic of Cameroon:

- i. Western Grassfields (Bamilike, Northeast, Ngemba, Nun)
- ii. Menchum
- iii. Momo
- iv. Ring

In the above divisions, Bafut is placed under the Ngemba subgroup of Western Grassfields languages. The languages listed below make up the main Bantu languages of the Ngemba subgroup:

Awing, Akum, Bafut, Bambili, Bambui, Mandankwe, Mankon, Mundum, Nkwen, Pinyin.

In a further subclassification of the Ngemba languages, Leroy (1977) proposes the following additions to the list:

Ala'tining, Babaji, Mbatu, Mundum I, Mundum II, Njong, Shomba, Songwa.

### Previous linguistic research

The first Linguistic work on Bafut was carried out in 1854 by Koelle. In *Polyglotta Africana*, Koelle presents a comparative vocabulary of nearly 300 words and phrases in more than 100 distinct African languages. Bafut figures as one of the languages in Koelle's list. The words contained in Koelle's inventory of the Bafut vocabulary are different from words of mainstream Bafut and because of this difference, Crozier, for instance, speculates that Koelle must have worked on the court dialect. It is also possible that Koelle's work was based on an earlier form of Bafut or the special speech form used among princes and princesses.

In his phonetic study of West African languages, Ladefoged (1964) presents a brief discussion of Bafut consonants and vowels. On the basis of his study, Bafut has 8 vowel phonemes and 13 consonant phonemes. In his discussion of phonological contrasts, Ladefoged claims that there are several consonant clusters with w as the second element. Mfonyam (1989) however interprets what Ladefoged calls consonant clusters as consonant modification.

In a brief study of Western Grassfields Bantu languages, Chilver and Kaberry (1974) include a considerable word list of Bafut. This list is comprised of nouns, verbs in the imperative form, personal pronouns, phrases with demonstrative pronouns and some kinship terms. An attempt is made in this study to mark tone but they acknowledge that their marking of tone is incomplete.

Crozier has done quite a lot of work on the Bafut language. He produced a reading and writing primer in 1980a, a study of Bafut phonology in 1980b and compiled an extensive word list (Bafut-English, English-Bafut) in 1980c. With Annett in 1978, he edited stories written in the Bafut language. Mfonyam has continued what Crozier started. He has produced a large number of reading and writing primers on the language. He is also credited for translating the New Testament into the Bafut language with the help of the Bafut language committee. At moment of going to press, Mfonyam is also working on a Bafut-English dictionary.

Several other linguists, among them Eastlack (1968), Dunstan (1971) and Leroy (1977a) have made reference to Bafut in their study of Bantu noun classes. The study of Bafut noun classes in these works is however preliminary in nature meant to serve for comparative purposes.

There are 8 major linguistic works on Bafut which give one a more or less clear picture of the grammar of the language. These works however focus on specific areas of the language and most of them are couched in formal theories of linguistics and so seek to justify these theories rather than provide a clear insight into the grammar of the language.

The first of these major works is Ambe's (1989) PhD thesis presented at Georgetown University. In it, Ambe focuses on constituents and the internal structure of various phrasal categories in the language. He attempts to classify nouns and verbs into various classes and discusses the properties of other word categories such as adjectives, determiners, etc.

Mfonyam (1989) devotes his doctoral dissertation to tone. He sets out in this dissertation to determine the most appropriate way of representing tone in the orthography of Bafut and related Grassfields Bantu languages. Before reaching this goal, he describes, in great detail, the surface tonal patterns in various grammatical categories and constructions in Bafut and related Grassfields Bantu languages.

Neba (1989 and 2006) devotes his MA and PhD theses to the study of Bafut tone using formal models of linguistic analysis including optimality theory. Both theses examine the

question of the underlying representation of tones as well as their surface realizations and related processes. In all, eleven allotones are attested in the language and processes such as the simultaneous lowering and raising of contiguous tones, downstep, downdrift, high tone spreading, etc. account for different surface realizations.

In the area of morphology, Bila's (1987) MA thesis is prominent. In this work, Bila demonstrates the centrality of the Bafut verb in linguistic expressions. In particular, he discusses formal (inflectional) and derivational suffixes which occur with verb stems and how these suffixes influence/determine verb valency.

With regard to Syntax, works by Tamanji (1991), Tanda (1993), Chumbow and Tamanji (1994) and Tamanji (1999) are worth noting. Tamanji (1991), based on Chomsky's Government and Binding theory, provides a description of the syntax of the Bafut noun phrase arguing that variant surface word orders result from the application of the GB Move-Alpha operation. Also based on generative syntactic views, Tanda (1994) investigates the structure of coordinate constructions in Bafut and establishes a relation between coordination and verb serialization in Bafut. His work proposes a unique parser which handles a wide range of coordinate constructions and serial verb constructions. Chumbow and Tamanji (1994) describe sentential negation in Bafut identifying the different morphemes that mark negation and showing how they interact with tense and other constituents of the sentence. In his 1999 Ph.D. dissertation, Tamanji describes the internal structure of the DP (determiner phrase) in Bafut with a view to proposing an account of the really rich agreement system in the DPs of the Bafut and Romance languages. He describes various DP types in the language and proposes that in addition to the familiar Spec-Head configuration required for checking Phi-features in clauses, we need a Head-Head configuration to check agreement in Bafut and Romance DPs.

As one can see from this overview of linguistic works on Bafut, much has been done on the language using formal models of linguistics. However, these works focus on specific aspects of the language such as the tone system, noun morphology, the verb group, the noun phrase, etc. Apart from Ambe's PhD thesis which attempts a description of many aspects of the grammar, no work has so far focused solely on a description of the entire grammar of the language. In the present volume therefore, I intend to fill this gap by attempting a comprehensive description of the grammar of the Bafut language. As much as possible, I will stay clear of any formal model of linguistic analysis and only provide a very simple straightforward description of the facts as they appear to me. I intend to make the description as simple as possible in order to make the book accessible to all categories of language practitioners who are interested in the Bafut language and in related Grassfields Bantu languages.

## Presentation of data

The data for this study is transcribed using the symbols of the International Phonetics Alphabet (IPA). I have decided not to use the letters of the Bafut alphabet in order to facilitate exploitation of the data by especially phonologists since the letters of an alphabet often "hide" some crucial phonological details. Each example, especially one that is longer than a single word, is presented in four lines as shown below.

*bɪfə̀ bjá kɪ ʃi'í tsə̀'ə̀ dzá ɲʃi'ì*  
 bɪ-fə̀ bja-á b-ì kɪ ʃi'í ì- tsə̀'ə̀ dz-á N-ʃi'í  
 2-chief 2-the 2-SM P2 wash 8-dresses 8-the N-wash  
 "The chiefs washed the dresses thoroughly".

The first line shows the utterance as it is said/pronounced in normal speech. The second line is a morpheme-by-morpheme representation of the utterance. The morphemes are separated using a

hyphen. The null prefix is generally not marked on nouns except when this is necessary to understand an issue at hand. The third line is the morpheme-by-morpheme translation. Digits in this line represent noun class and related concord. In the example above, *chiefs* is a class 2 noun. In the morpheme-by-morpheme translation, the class prefix is indicated by the digit 2. The same digit on the following definite article and subject marker (SM) shows that this definite article and the subject marker agree in noun class with the preceding noun. The fourth and last line represents my attempt at giving an English translation of the utterance.

In the stories from which data for this study were collected, animals are personified. As such, we find instances in the data in which an animal name is spelt in upper case in the middle of a sentence and/or written without an accompanying definite article as one would do with ordinary names of humans.

## Acknowledgements

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# Chapter 1

## The sound system

### Introduction

The Bafut sound system comprises 21 consonant, 9 vowel and 2 tone phonemes. Section 2 presents an inventory, evidence for phonemic contrasts, distribution and interpretation of consonants. Section 3 presents the inventory, contrasts, distribution and interpretation of vowels. Section 4 handles tones while section 5 gives an overview of the syllable structure leaving out details which will be filled out in the relevant sections of subsequent chapters.

### 1. Consonants

The consonant sounds of Bafut are presented in the chart below. In this chart, the names at the top denote the point of articulation while those at the side denote manner of articulation. In each "box" consonants at the top are voiceless while those at the bottom are voiced. The symbols used are those of the IPA.

Table : Phonemic Consonant Chart

Manner Of Art. ↓		Place Of Art. ⇒		Labials	Alveolars	Post Alveolars	Palatals	Velars	Glottals
Stops	Oral				t t <sup>w</sup>			k	ʔ
				b	d			g	
	Nasal			m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
	Syllabic Nasals			m̩	n̩			ŋ̩	
Prenasals	VL				nt			ŋk	
	VD			mb	nd			ŋg	
Fricatives	VL			f	s	ʃ			
	VD				z	ʒ		ɣ	
Affricates	VL				ts	tʃ		kx	
	VD				dz	dʒ			
Prenasalised Affricates	VL				nts	ntʃ			
	VD				ndz	ndʒ			
Laterals	VD				l				
Trills	VD				r				
Glides	VD			w			j		

The phonetic sounds presented in the table above will be used in transcribing the data for the present study. In the transcription, the glottal stop [ʔ] will be represented by the apostrophe ['], e.g. [móʔó] will be transcribed as [mó'ó].

Following are examples showing contrast between the 21 consonant phonemes attested in the language. In the pairs of contrast, an attempt is made to represent front, central and back vowels as well as the two major word classes; nouns and verbs. The presentation begins with sounds whose status as phonemes is easy to establish. Then sounds whose phonemic status is not immediately clear are presented with reasons for treating them as phonemes or otherwise.

### 1.1. Phonemic contrasts

#### 1. t & d

/t/ is a voiceless alveolar stop while /d/ is the voiced counterpart. The two sounds contrast in the following words:

à-tà'â	'snail'	ñ-tòò	'village head'	à-tì	'tree/stick'
à-dà'â	'energy/strength'	ñ-dòò	'misfortune/ ill luck'	à-dì	'bad faith/wickedness'
dàŋsâ	'cross (gutter)!'	over tò'ô	'support (with pole)!'	ñ-tá'â	'hill/mountain'
tàŋsá	'resist pain!'	dò'ô	'push (violently)'	ñ-dá'â	'type of bird'

#### 2. s, ts, dz & j

/s/ is a voiceless alveolar fricative, /dz/ is a voiced alveolar affricate, /ts/ a voiceless alveolar affricate and /j/ a voiced palatal approximant. The phonemic status of these sounds is demonstrated in the following examples:

sé'é	'gather from the ground!'	ñ-sòò	'farm'
tsé'é	'cut (object, e.g. stick)!'	ñ-tsò	'war'
dzé'é	'feed!'	ñ-dzò	'prayer/curse'
yè'ê	'sweep!'	à-yóò	'thing/object'
sá'â	'scoop!'	ì-sò'ò	'ladles'
tsá'â	'be sharp (e.g. knife)/be wild'	ì-tsò'ò	'type of fruit'
dzà'â	'belch!'	ì-dzò'ò	'catarrh'
yà'â	'cry !'		
sòŋâ	'pull out!'	ñ-sù	'friend'
tsóŋâ	'corrupt!'	ñ-tsù	'mouth'
yòŋâ	'quarrel!'	ñ-dzù	'large peanuts'

#### 3. d & l

/l/ is a voiced alveolar lateral. /l/ contrasts with the voiced alveolar stop /d/ in the following words:



dò'ô	'push violently!'	à-dà'à	'energy/strength/power'
lò'ô	'curse!'	à-là'à	'wound/sore'
dè'ê	'push lightly!'	lòŋê	'put bait on trap!'
lè'ê	'prepare food with great care!'	dòŋê	'put handle on hoe/knife!'

#### 4. k & g

/k/ is a voiceless velar stop while /g/ is the voiced counterpart. Both sounds contrast in the words below.

à-kò	'bush'	ŋ-kùù	'tail'	ŋ-kèè	'age group'	kàŋê	'choose'
à-gò	'stupid person'	ŋ-gùù	'skin'	ŋ-gèè	'grass/weed'	gàŋê	'grip'

#### 5. g & ɣ

/ɣ/ is a voiced velar fricative. It contrasts with /g/ in the following words:

gàŋê	'grip'	à-gâŋ	'group of thieves/wild animals'
ɣàŋê	'tie roughly'	à-ɣâŋ	'bundle'
nì-gò	'chest'	gáâ	'coerce'
nì-ɣò	'pit for making palm oil'	ɣáâ	'tour/roam about'

#### 6. m, n & ŋ

These three sounds are nasals. /m/ is bilabial, /n/ is alveolar and /ŋ/ is velar.

mù'û	'put into mouth!'	mà'â	'throw!'	máà	'grandmother'
nù'û	'add oil to food!'	nà'â	'despise!'	nàà	'animal'
ŋú'û	'swell!'	ŋá'â	'open!'	ŋáà	'acquire by chance!'

#### 7. b, m, w & f

These are labial sounds. /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop, /m/ a nasal, /w/ a voiced labialvelar approximant and /f/ is a voiceless labio-dental fricative. These four sounds contrast in the following groups of words:

bà'â	'push aside/away!'	bí'î	'spark!'
mà'â	'throw down!'	mì'î	'shake to remove water!'
wà'â	'scare away with loud noise!'	wì'î	'wriggle!'
fâ'â	'work!'	fí'î	'remove!'
bè'ê	'scratch lightly!'	bú'û	'beat with a club!'

mé'ê	'bleat (sheep/goat)!'	mù'û	'put into mouth!'
wé'ê	'put on clothes!'	wú'û	'short (become)!'
fê'ê	'go out!'	fù'û	'harvest!'
fé'ê	'hire/get initiated'	fú'û	'become white'

## 8. f & ɟ

/f/ is a voiceless postalveolar fricative while /ɟ/ is the voiced counterpart. Both sounds contrast in minimal/near minimal pairs as illustrated in the examples that follow.

ɟĩ	'come!'	fĩ	'today'
ɟwì'î	'ready to move (termites)!'	fɟwì'î	'pour huge quantities on ground!'
ɟwítê	'kill!'	fɟwítê	'pour little quantities on ground!'
à-ɟwì	'breathe/soul'	à-fɟwì'î	'vapour'

## 9. ts & tʃ

/ts/ is a voiceless alveolar affricate while /tʃ/ is a voiceless postalveolar affricate. /tʃ/ contrasts with /ts/ in the following minimal and near minimal pairs:

tsítê	'shut down!'	tsí'î	'only'	tsî	'sit down/stay!'
tʃítê	'catch up with!'	tʃí'î	'meet someone!'	tʃî	'play huge drum!'

## 10. dz & dʒ

The voiced postalveolar affricate /dʒ/, seems to be a contextual variant of the voiced alveolar affricate dz. However they both occur in similar positions in a word and are followed by the same vowels as in:

ñ-dzàà	'axe'	ñ-dzìm	'back'	dzìnê	'kick violently!'
ñ-dʒà	'soup'	dʒî	'eat!'	dʒí'ínê	'sneeze!'

This distribution, as well as the contrast in the meanings of the first and last pair of words suggest that dz and dʒ are separate phonemes.

### 1.2. The Status of other consonant sounds.

A number of consonant sounds in Bafut pose problems in determining their phonemic status. I will examine these sounds and advance reasons for treating them in this study as phonemes or allophones.

#### a. l and r

The alveolar trill r has a very restricted distribution in Bafut. It occurs intervocalically before the central vowels ə and i and only when these vowels are short. I will treat r as an allophone of l because of its distribution and behavior in loan words. The lateral l, but not the trill r, occurs in

word initial position and is followed by all Bafut vowels. This is illustrated in the following words.

- (11) láâ ‘cook!’                      lèê ‘keep!’                      lèê ‘look for!’  
 lè’ê ‘cook with care!’      líŋê ‘lick!’                      línsê ‘mark!’  
 lú’ú ‘spoon’                      lóô ‘bite!’                      lélé ‘ululating sound’

On the other hand, r occurs exclusively in intervocalic position and is followed by a restricted number of vowels; ə and i only.

- (12) à-kòrì ‘foot’  
 mî-wúrì ‘oil’  
 à-mbòrè ‘vegetable’  
 káárê ‘fold/twist!’

Also, with some speakers, the [r] in these words is realized as [l].

In a majority of loan words containing r the tendency is to substitute r for l. This is illustrated below.

- (13) landrover → lánlóbà  
 trousers → tòlósà  
 driver → dòlóbà  
 rubber → lóbà  
 rent → léntì

Few words containing r are however still attested in the speech of a few educated speakers of Bafut.

- (14) rédyò ‘radio’  
 trêñ ‘train’

These, I think, are words that are not yet fully integrated into the sound system of the language.

The alveolar trill r and the lateral l occur in free variation in some contexts. It is worth noting that this variation is attested exclusively in word medial position and very often in the speech of speakers who interact frequently with speakers from other dialectal regions. Otherwise, where speakers of the peripheral dialect use r, those of the central dialect use l.

e.g. <u>Central Dialect</u>	<u>Peripheral Dialect</u>	
à-kòlì	à-kòrè	‘foot’
ñ-jèlê	ñ-jèrê	‘thief’
jóólê	jóórê	‘dry up in patches’
nè’òlê	nè’òrê	‘press randomly’

Based on the restricted distribution of r and its behavior in loan words, I decide to treat it as an allophone of /l/.

## b. The Glottal Stop

The glottal stop in Bafut has a very limited distribution. It occurs exclusively in syllable final position and, in this position, it is often followed by an echo vowel. At first sight, this limited distribution seems to suggest that the glottal stop is a contextual variant of some other sound. However, in some otherwise similar words, the presence versus absence of the glottal stop affects the meanings of the words. Consider the examples below:

(15)	à-bùù	‘ridge’	kóô	‘clean!’
	à-bù’ù	‘slave’	kó’ô	‘climb!’
	à-bàà	‘bag’	bóô	‘hunt!’
	à-bà’à	‘door’	bó’ô	‘shout out/cry out loud!’
	à-bèè	‘outside/daylight’	lòô	‘keep!’
	à-bè’è	‘shoulder’	lò’ô	‘be slippery’

These pairs of words differ from each other only in the presence versus absence of the glottal stop and this difference signals a change in the meaning of the words. Despite the limited distribution of the glottal stop, it will be treated as a separate phoneme based on its role in distinguishing meaning in the words above.

## c. The Alveolar Fricative z

In the data collected for the present study, z occurs in a very small number of words in the speech forms of some aged speakers of the central dialect. In such words, z is in free variation with ʒ and j. The few words in which this variation is attested are presented in (16).

(16)	ʒĩ	~	zĩ	~	jĩ	‘come’
	ʒî	~	zî	~	jî	‘know’
		~	zè’è	~	jè’è	‘sweep’

Interestingly, present generation speakers of Bafut (including speakers who are over 60 years old) find the use of the sound z in the first two words in (16) rather odd preferring to use the voiced postalveolar affricate ʒ in its place. In the third word, the only pronunciation accepted is that with j. This seems to indicate that z is gradually phasing out of the sound system of Bafut. More evidence supporting this claim comes from the behaviour of z in borrowed words. In borrowed words like these below, z is realized as j.

(17)	ziŋk	---->	jîŋ	‘zinc’
	zimbabwe	---->	jìmbábwè	‘Zimbabwe’

Based on these observations, it does not make sense to treat z as a separate phoneme in Bafut.

Before we conclude this section on consonants, it is worth noting that all the consonant sounds presented above occur in syllable-initial position. However, only the nasal consonants

occur at syllable final position. We return to this in section 5 where we examine the syllable structure of the language.

## 2. Vowels

Bafut has a total of 13 short vowels and 11 corresponding long ones. The phonetic chart below contains only the short vowels.

Table : Phonemic Vowel Chart

Tongue Position ⇒ Tongue Height ↓	Front Unrounded	Center Unrounded	Back Unrounded	Back Rounded
High	i ɪ	ɨ	ɯ	u ʊ
Mid-High	e	ɜ ɚ		o
Mid-Low	ɛ			ɔ
Low		a		

### 2.1. Phonemic Contrasts

The vowels in the pairs [i, ɪ], [u, ʊ] and [ə, ɜ] constitute a point of controversy in the grammar of Bafut (see Ambe 1989, Mfonyam 1989, Niba 2007 for further discussion). In each of these pairs, the first member is tense while the second is lax. The lax vowel is often shorter, lower and slightly more centralized than the corresponding tense vowel. Also, there appears to be a general tendency for the lax vowels to occur in low tone syllables. In the pair [[ə, ɜ], I have used [ɜ] for lack of an appropriate symbol. It should be pronounced as the tensed counterpart of the schwa [ə] sound.

### 18. Front Vowels

The four front vowels in Bafut are /i/ high, /ɪ/ high, /e/ mid high and /ɛ/ mid low. The tongue position for /i/ is slightly lower than that for cardinal vowel 1 with lips decidedly spread. For the lax counterpart /ɪ/, the tongue position is decidedly lower and more centralized. For /e/ and /ɛ/, the lips are spread and the tongue is midway between the roof and the floor of the mouth. The four front vowels contrast in the following words:

/i/	/ɪ/	/e/	/ɛ/
ɲ-fî ‘face’		ɲ-fê ‘earth/soil/ground’	
fîî ‘become black’			fêê ‘slap!’
fî’î ‘remove!’			fê’ê ‘organise a feast!’

bì'î 'sprout'    bì'î 'carry!'

bè'ê 'scratch lightly!'

The Bafut high front vowel is not as high as the English counterpart. It is generally realized at a level lower than that of ordinary high vowels but higher than the level at which mid high vowels are realized. There is very little contrast between the mid high vowel /e/ and other front vowels. The absence of this contrast, coupled with the fact that /e/ is attested in a very small number of words, suggests the possibility that either the mid high /e/ is gradually dying out of use or it is merging with mid low /ɛ/ into a single phonological unit.

### 19. Central Vowels

Of the four central vowels in Bafut, /i/ is high, /ə/ and /ɜ/ are mid while /a/ is low. All four are pronounced with the lips in a neutral position. High /i/ and mid /ə/ are very similar in pronunciation the only difference being that the tongue is closer to the roof of the mouth in /i/ than in /ə/. Three of the Bafut central vowels contrast in the following set of words:

/i/		/ə/		/ɜ/		/a/	
fí	'it (cl.19)'	fə	'where'	fɜ	'give'	fâ	'give'
à-tî	'half'	à-tə	'calabash'	à-tɜ	'deep hole'	à-tâ	'deep hole'
ñ-dî	'witch'	ñ-də	'penis'	ñ-dɜ	'trap'	ñ-dâ	'trap'
m-bî	'stem/trunk'	m-bə	'chalk'	m-bɜ	'embankment'	m-bâ	'embankment'
tî	'get strong/well!'	tə	'stand/walk!'	tɜ	'line up!'	tâ	'line up!'
		jə	'sing'	jɜ	'see!'		

The fourth central vowel [ɜ] is very rare in the language. From the data collected for this study, it appears only three times: in the verb [jɜ] 'see' the person name [àjɜ] and the question tag marker [jɜ]. An appropriate minimal pair of words contrasting this vowel and some other mid vowel in the language could not be found. However, a contrast such as in jɜ 'see' and jə 'sing' suggests its phonemic status.

### 20. Back Vowels

The four back vowels are /u/ high tense, /ʊ/ high lax, /o/ mid high, and /ɔ/ mid low. The tongue position for /u/ is somewhat lower than that for cardinal vowel 8 but the lips are fully rounded. For the lax counterpart /ʊ/, the tongue position is even lower and more centralized. /o/ and /ɔ/ are also produced with fully rounded lips which are slightly protruding. The tongue is mid way between the floor and the roof of the mouth. The distinctive property of these four vowels is illustrated in the following contrasts:

/u/		/ʊ/		/o/		/ɔ/	
lúù	'become full'	lú	'body'	lóò	'bite!'	ló	'beg!'
nwú	'honey'	nô	'body'	nó	'snake'	ì-nòò	'crowd'
bwú	'transform!'			bóò	'hunt!'	bó	'build!'

à-búù	‘side bone’	à-bùù	‘ridge’	à-bòò	‘weevil’	à-bòò	‘clay’
yúù	‘buy!’			jòô	‘peel!’	yóó	‘huge basket’
ñ-dùù	‘cocoyam seedlings’	ñ-dùù	‘hammer’	ñ-dóò	‘husband’	ñ-dòò	‘curse/illluck’

The high back unrounded vowel [ɯ] occurs in a very small number of words in the language. Some of the words in which this sound is attested are *lú* ‘jump’, *dù’ú* ‘show’, *ndú’ú’ú* ‘advice’, *ibú* ‘sin’ and *ndú’ú* ‘commandment/will’. This vowel is another source of controversy in the grammar of Bafut. It does not feature in earlier studies such as Mfonyam (1989), Ambe (1989), Tamanji (1986, 1999), etc. In the earlier works, the words in which this sound is attested are transcribed with the high central unrounded vowel [i]. Because of its contrastive distribution with closely related vowels such as u, ɔ and o, I treat it as a separate phoneme in the language.

## 2.2. Vowel Length

Vowel length in Bafut, as in many Bantu languages, is contrastive. This is illustrated below.

(21)	à-tì	‘tree/stick’	à-bà	‘birth mark’	à-bô	‘hand’
	à-tìì	‘waist’	à-bàà	‘bag’	à-bòò	‘hunt’
	à-bè	‘blemish’	à-lô	‘fishing’	à-bwû	‘wood ash’
	à-bèè	‘case/outside’	à-lôô	‘tongue/blood’	à-búù	‘rib bone’

## 2.3. Distribution of Vowels

All the vowels of Bafut can occur in syllable or word final position. There is however a restriction as to which vowel can occur in affixes. Only nouns and related modifying constituents in Bafut have prefixes. In these prefixes, only the vowels a and i can occur. In suffixes on the other hand, occurrence is restricted to i and ɔ. Long vowels are restricted to occurring in word-final position. Except in derived environments, and in very rare instances, a long vowel never occurs in word medial position.

## 3. Tones

In this section, I sketch out the tone system of Bafut limiting the discussion to an inventory of phonemic tones in the language. Tonal processes in Bafut are numerous; probably an indication that diachronically, the language has lost many segments (TBUs) whose tones now manifest as floating tones. However, a detailed study of these tonal processes is way beyond the scope of this book. In the following section, I will briefly comment on only those tone processes that have a direct bearing on the discussion in subsequent chapters. For a more detailed discussion of tonal processes in Bafut, see Mfonyam (1989) and Neba (1998), (2004), (2006), (2007).

Bafut has two level (register) phonemic tones: H (high), and L (low). The data in (22) illustrates the phonemic contrasts between the two level tones.

(22)	H		L	
	báá	‘measure of oil’	bàà	‘type of tree’
	káá	‘crab’	à-kàà	‘oath’
	bú’ú	‘baboon’	à-bù’ù	‘slave’
	nwí	‘cutlass’	nwì	‘God’
	tó’ó	‘tin/cup’	tò’ó	‘support, hurt someone’s eye’

In a language with a two way tone contrast the following 3 tone patterns are generally possible on disyllabic roots:

- (23) a. HH  
b. HL  
c. LL

These patterns occur on disyllabic noun roots in Bafut as illustrated in (24).

- (24) a. títa ‘pepper’  
b. mánì ‘step sister’  
c. ñ-gò’ò ‘stone’

A LH pattern, which is another very plausible combination in a two-way tone contrast is not very evident in Bafut because of a general lowering process which lowers a H tone immediately after a L. Thus, in a possible LH pattern, the H would be realized at a level lower than that for ordinary high tones. This general lowering shows up in nouns with a high tone root and a low tone prefix. For instance, if a low tone prefix is affixed to the high tone roots in column I below the root high tone is lowered as in column II. I indicate lowering using the down arrow ↓. It is hard to say with certainty whether the high tone is lowered to mid or simply down stepped although my judgments lean more towards down stepping.

(25)	I	II	
	ø-títá	bì-↓títá	‘pepper(s)’
	ø-lú’ú	bì-↓lú’ú	‘spoon(s)’
	ø-lóŋó	bì-↓lóŋó	‘horse(s)’
	ø-fórí	bì-↓fórí	‘rat(s)’
	ø-tó’ó	bì-↓tó’ó	‘tin(s)’

In a very small number of words, the low tone on the noun prefix raises to a level close to mid when the noun stem bears a high tone. Compare the minimal pairs below in which the mid tone represents this raising.

- (26) a. à-là’à ‘wound/sore’      c. nì-bò’ò ‘pumpkin’  
b. ā-lá’á ‘village/country’      d. nī-bó’ó ‘fear’

This data is however insufficient to make a generalization about the existence of a tone assimilation process in which a high tone raises preceding L tones.

A good number of words bear contour tones (falling and rising) in the language. I treat these contour tones as sequences of level tones for two principal reasons: (a) The number of contour tones is very limited and they have a restricted distribution, (b) Where a tone copying



rule applies to a contour tone, it copies only the final element of the contour and not both (see Mfonyam 1989:82 for an illustration of this copying process).

A very large number of other interesting tonal phenomena are attested in the grammar of the Bafut language. I however prefer to discuss these in the relevant sections where the associated morphological/syntactic facts are discussed. See for instance boundary tone association and H tone lowering in §3.1 where I treat the syllable structure of nouns, Tone docking in §6.3.1 where I treat the associative construction and H tone spreading in chapter 7 which discusses the verb group.

#### 4. Syllable Structure

Bafut has open and close syllables attested in nouns, verbs and affixes. The basic syllable types are:

- |      |    |     |             |                          |               |
|------|----|-----|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| (27) | a. | CV  | nó          | fâ                       | bì-           |
|      |    |     | ‘snake’     | ‘give!’                  | ‘noun prefix’ |
|      |    | CVC | síŋ         |                          |               |
|      |    |     | ‘bird’      |                          |               |
|      |    | V   | à           |                          |               |
|      |    |     | ‘he/she/it’ |                          |               |
|      |    | N   | m̀bà        | ŋ-k̀d̀ŋó                 |               |
|      |    |     | ‘meat’      | ‘nominalizer-like/love!’ |               |

We observe from these examples that the syllable structure consists of an obligatory syllable peak or nucleus V (vowel)/N (syllabic nasal) and an optional marginal consonant element which serves as either Onset or Coda. All the consonant phonemes presented in section 2.1.1. can appear in onset position. The coda position, on the other hand, is restricted to nasal consonants only. The nasal consonant which serves as an affix shares the same place of articulation features as the following consonant as illustrated below:

- |      |    |       |             |
|------|----|-------|-------------|
| (28) | a. | m̀-ɸ̀ | ‘chief’     |
|      | b. | ŋ-t̀ŋ | ‘neck’      |
|      | c. | ŋ-dâ  | ‘house’     |
|      | d. | ŋ-kâm | ‘a million’ |
|      | e. | ŋ-gùù | ‘skin’      |

The onset consonant can be labialized, palatalized or both labialized and palatalized. In such cases, the structure of the syllable is still (C)V(C) since labialization and palatalization are treated here as instances of consonant modification (and not as a second instance of a consonant in a CC cluster). The structure of the words in the examples below is as indicated.

- |      |    |                |                   |
|------|----|----------------|-------------------|
| (29) | a. | nwí            | C <sup>w</sup> V  |
|      |    | ‘machette’     |                   |
|      | b. | bjâ            | C <sup>y</sup> V  |
|      |    | ‘pear’         |                   |
|      | c. | gwjè           | C <sup>wj</sup> V |
|      |    | ‘court jester’ |                   |

Another reason why these words are not treated as having a CCV/CCCV structure is that consonant clusters are not attested elsewhere in the language. Wherever a sequence of two or more consonants is found, the second/third is always a glide.

### Conclusion

A lot more remains to be said about the sound system and syllable structure of the Bafut language. In fact, the discussion in this chapter should be considered simply as an “eye opener” to the complexity of the sound system of the language. Much still needs to be done, for instance, to determine the number and quality of Bafut vowels. I leave this rather prohibitive task to the phonologists. Also, I mentioned pre-nasalization earlier on in the chapter when presenting the sound inventory but this was not discussed anywhere else in the chapter. This is another area of the grammar of the language that needs a careful investigation. Finally, as I have just mentioned above, many tone processes remain undescribed. The same is true of a few segmental processes like vowel coalescence, central vowel raising, final nasal deletion, etc. The discussion of these processes, in my opinion, will be easier to understand if treated in the relevant sections of the work where the associated morphological/syntactic phenomena are discussed. So we just note that these phenomena exist but post-pone discussion of them until later.

## Chapter 2 Noun classes and structure

### Introduction

Four studies have been carried out on the structure of the noun in Bafut by Eastlack (1968), Dunstan (1971), Leroy (1979) and Mfonyam (1989). The first three studies are of a preliminary nature meant to serve for comparative purposes either within the larger framework of the Mbam-Nkam group or the Ngemba group of languages. Mfonyam's work is the only one that focuses on the noun class system of Bafut alone without an eye to comparison. Although Mfonyam's work is quite detailed, it was carried out against the background of the search for an appropriate tone marking system in Bafut orthography. These works have served as a basis for our description of the noun in Bafut. We have also drawn upon other works especially Ayuninjam (1998) which has proved very useful to our study because the noun class system of Mbili is in many ways similar to that of Bafut.

The present chapter describes the structure of the Bafut noun with attention focused primarily on the internal constituency of the noun. The first section briefly describes the syllable and tone patterns of the Bafut noun. Section 2 presents the classification of nouns into different morphological classes and suggests ways of handling some irregular nouns. Section 3 examines the gender system while section 4 presents the concord system.

### 1. Syllable structure and tone patterns of nouns

The stems of most Bafut nouns are either monosyllabic or bisyllabic. A few nouns have trisyllabic stems and a very small number, especially borrowed and derived nouns, have four syllables. Five syllables are attested only in compound nouns (see chapter 4). The prefix of the noun always bears a low tone in citation form. In presenting examples in this section and in the rest of the chapter, the prefix of the noun is separated from the stem by a hyphen (-).

#### 1.1 Monosyllabic noun stems

Monosyllabic noun stems bear either a low or a high tone in citation form. These basic tones are often affected, in various ways, by phonetic factors such as intonation, stress and neighbouring tones. Following are some examples of monosyllabic noun stems and their basic tones.

(1)	a.	m̀-bà	'meat'	h.	ø-síŋ	'bird'
	b.	à-s̀m	'type of dance'	i.	ø-nwí	'cutlass'
	c.	ì-k̀d̀	'belt'	j.	ø-nó	'snake'
	d.	ǹ-ì-k̀d̀ŋ	'spear'	k.	m-ù	'child'
	e.	f̀-ì-k̀ù	'small bed'	l.	m̀-bî	'goat'
	f.	ŋ-ù	'person'	m.	à-tù	'head'
	g.	ø-l̀ù	'tree rat'	n.	à-bô	'hand'

The group of nouns in h-n is very interesting. While the nouns in k-n are realized with a falling contour tone on the stem, the tone on the stems of the nouns in h-j remains level high. Considering just the nouns in k-n, it seems reasonable to conclude that the low segment of the contour tone is a boundary low tone. This is borne out by the fact that when a noun modifier, e.g. a definite article, is added to these nouns, the low boundary tone is then realized on the modifier.

e.g. mú wâ ‘the child’  
 à-tú jâ ‘the head’  
 m̀- bí jâ ‘the goat’

There is however a problem with this analysis. Why is the boundary tone not also realized on the nouns in h-j? It seems plausible to assume, following Leroy (1979) that the nouns in h-j have a floating H tone while those in k-n have a floating L tone. It is the floating L that occasions the falling contour tone on ‘child’ for instance and not boundary intonation facts.

These two sets of stems (i.e. h – j on the one hand and k – n on the other hand) also manifest another difference with respect to neighbouring tones. Specifically, when a prefix (which usually bears a low tone) is attached to the stem, the H segment of the contour in the stems in (k – n) is lowered while the H in the examples in (h – j) remains level high. It is rather difficult to say for certain whether the high in the relevant cases is lowered to mid or is simply a down stepped high. See Neba (2006 and 2008) for further discussion on these interesting tone phenomena.

## 1.2. Bisyllabic noun stems

Bisyllabic noun stems have various tone patterns. These are: HH, L-LL, L-HL, L- LHL̄.

(2)	a.	ø-fóri	‘mouse’	m.	nì-bò’ò	‘pumpkin’
	b.	ø-lónó	‘horse’	n.	bì-bàtì	‘wine calabashes’
	c.	ø-tó’ó	‘tin’	o.	m̀- lù’ù	‘wine’
	d.	ø-lú’ú	‘spoon’	p.	à-mògò	‘dew’
	e.	ø-títá	‘pepper’	q.	à-wùgì	‘wall (of house)’
	f.	ø-ńínín	‘tiny fly’	r.	à-kwúsì	‘lid/cover’
	g.	b̀- fórí	‘mice’	s.	ǹ- ǵóǵò	‘praying mantis’
	h.	b̀- lónó	‘horses’	t.	ì- bítì	‘questions’
	i.	b̀- tó’ó	‘tins’	u.	à- kwè’è	‘cough’
	j.	b̀- lú’ú	‘spoons’	v.	à- kàrô	‘English (language)’
	k.	b̀- títá	‘peppers’	w.	à- bàrô	‘madness/mad person’
	l.	b̀- ńínín	‘tiny flies’	x.	à- ńìrô	‘aubergine (garden egg)’

The HH pattern is found exclusively on the prefixless noun stems of class 1a. The HH pattern in these stems remains level high. When these stems take the low tone plural prefix, they pattern into two groups depending on how they react to the preceding L tone on the plural prefix. The H tone on both syllables of the nouns in (2a-d) is stepped (lowered). In the nouns in (2e-f) on the other hand, only the H on the first syllable is stepped (lowered). The H on the second syllable remains level H. It is difficult to say whether the H tones in these cases are lowered to level of a M tone or to a level between M and H. For this reason, I have not indicated the lowering in the surface forms.

A low tone prefix also affects (steps) the first H in the L-HL pattern. The L-LHL̄ pattern in (2t-x) is not very common and the few examples of nouns with this pattern are found in class 7. The H segment of the contour in this pattern is also realized as a stepped H.

### 1.3 Trisyllabic noun stems

Three-syllable noun stems are very few in Bafut. The tone patterns on these nouns include L-LLL (3a – 3c), (L)-HHH (3d – 3e), L-HHL (3f – 3h), and L-HLL (3i – 3k).

(3)	a.	m̀-̀b̀̀g̀̀t̀̀t̀̀	‘insult’	i.	̀ǹ-̀s̀́k̀̀à̀’̀	‘friend’
	b.	m̀-̀f̀̀d̀’̀̀ǹ̀	‘blind person’	j.	m̀-̀b̀́índz̀̀r̀̀	‘sheep’
	c.	̀ǹ-̀s̀̀à̀ǹ̀d̀̀b̀̀è̀è̀	‘court yard’	k.	̀à̀-̀ỳ̀á̀’̀à̀t̀̀	‘armpit’
	d.	̀ø̀-̀k̀̀ó̀’̀̀s̀́	‘type of yam’			
	e.	̀ì̀-̀k̀́í́k̀̀ó̀’̀̀	‘dumb persons’			
	f.	b̀ì̀-̀b̀́ás̀́í́k̀̀ò̀	‘bicycles’			
	g.	̀à̀-̀b̀́ó̀r̀́í́k̀̀ì̀	‘laziness’			
	h.	̀ø̀-̀t̀́ák̀́úm̀̀b̀̀è̀ǹ̀	‘type of juju’			

Preceding low tones generally step a following high tone. In the L-HHH, and L-HHL patterns, the stepping effect extends onto the second H tone of the stem.

### 1.4 Quadrisyllabic nouns

The few quadrisyllabic nouns in Bafut belong in class 1a. It must be underscored here that these noun stems are complex and like the trisyllabic stems are derived from several morphemes. The tone patterns found on these nouns are: HHHL, HHLL, HHHH, and LHLL.

(4)	a.	̀ø̀-̀b̀́á̀’̀á́m̀́í́ỳ̀à̀	‘millipede’
	b.	̀ø̀-̀ǹ́á̀ǹ̀é̀b̀́í́r̀̀	‘spring (water)’
	c.	̀ø̀-̀t̀́áb̀́á̀’̀á́ǹ̀	‘butterfly’
	d.	̀ø̀-̀k̀́ẁ́í́m̀́á̀ǹ̀k̀̀è̀’̀̀	‘tortoise’
	e.	̀ø̀-̀b̀́ú̀’̀ú́t̀́t̀̀t̀̀	‘woodpecker’
	f.	̀ø̀-̀k̀̀ù̀m̀t̀́áj̀̀ì̀’̀̀	‘a species of bananas’
	g.	̀ø̀-̀t̀́s̀́í́t̀́á́k̀̀r̀̀	‘wall cricket’
	h.	̀ø̀-̀ǹ́á̀g̀́íǹ́á́ỳ̀ó̀	‘chameleon’

When the class 2 plural prefix is attached to these nouns, the stepping effect proceeds as discussed above; that is, the first two high tones following the low on the prefix are stepped.

## 2. Noun classes

The noun can be defined simply as a word which denotes the name of a person or of a thing; concrete or abstract. It is a substantive generally composed of two formatives: a stem and an affix. In Bafut, as already mentioned in the previous section, the noun is composed of a stem and a prefix. Suffixes are generally not attested. The noun is the governing element in the nominal group as the form of the noun prefix influences the form of concord markers on pronouns, determiners, adjectives, etc. when these other parts of speech are concatenated with the noun. Bafut nouns are divided into "classes" and "class genders" according to the form of their prefixes and the concord pattern that the nouns trigger on related words. The same stem can appear with a different prefix depending on whether it is used in the singular or plural. Although this Bantu-

like "class" and "class gender" system exists in Bafut, no case can be made out of relating these prefixes to those of true Bantu. Following is a table of the noun class prefixes in Bafut compared with those of the proto Bantu system reconstructed in Meeusen (1980).

Table I: Bafut and Proto-Bantu noun class prefixes

Singular prefixes			Plural prefixes		
Class N <sup>0</sup> .	Proto-Bantu Pref	Bafut Prefix	Class N <sup>0</sup> .	Proto-Bantu prefix	Bafut Prefix
1	mu-	N-, ø-	2	ba-	bì-
3	mu-	ì-, N			
5	dì-	nì-	6	ma-	mì-
7	kì-	à-	8	bì-	ì-
9	N-	N-	10	N-	N-
19	fì-	fì-			

Although a formal relationship can be established (with much effort) between some proto-Bantu and Bafut noun class prefixes, there is very little else of any convincing nature that can be said about the relatedness of Bafut to Proto-Bantu noun classes.

The noun stem in Bafut is generally morphologically constant being subject to only phonological changes (especially tonal). On the other hand, prefixes may be interchanged to express number or to indicate the gender to which the noun belongs. Here are some examples where prefixes are interchanged to indicate number and gender.

(5)	Change in number		Change of gender	
	m̄-f̄ɔ̄ "chief"	bì-f̄ɔ̄ "chiefs"	ì-kùù 'bed'	fì-kùù 'small bed'
	à-bàà "bag"	ì-bàà "bags"	ì-kùm 'name'	ḡ-kùm 'noble'
	nì-bà "wing"	mì-bà "wings"	nì-kà'à 'leg'	fì-kà'à 'clog'

Bafut nouns pattern into 10 morphological classes (6 singular and 4 plural) according to the form of their prefixes and of the concordial agreement. The class and gender systems are the only clear features of proto Bantu that are attested in the Bafut noun morphology. Classes 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 19 are singular classes while classes 2, 6, 8, and 10 are plural classes. The classification of nouns into these different classes is based on (a) identity in nominal prefixes, (b) singular-plural pairing, and, most important, (c) identity in the system of concords. The numbering system is that proposed by Bleek (1862) and Meinhof (1899). I present the different classes below along with their salient characteristics.

## 2.1 Noun class 1 / ø-, N/

Class 1 nouns are subdivided into two subclasses based on the prefixes of the nouns. The nouns in all two subclasses, however form their plural in the same class (class 2) and employ the same concord elements in larger nominal constructions. Semantically, class 1 nouns refer to animate entities, and primarily to the subcategory human: their kinship roles, and their occupations or professions. Borrowed words also belong in this class. The two subclasses identified are:

### A. Noun class 1a / ø- /

The nouns in this subclass have a zero prefix. Loan words into the language belong in this class. A few animal names are also found in this class. Examples of nouns in this sub-class are:

(6) a.	ø-lú'ú	'spoon'	k.	ø-fíláwà	'flower'
b.	ø-kàrì	'ring (finger)'	l.	ø-mítù	'motor car'
c.	ø-síŋ	'bird'	m.	ø-báà	'bar'
d.	ø-sòrì	'witch'	n.	ø-tábèrè	'table'
e.	ø-fórí	'rat'	o.	ø-bóó dà	'powder'
f.	ø-káá	'crab'	p.	ø-bíŋgísì	'hinge (door)'
g.	ø-máŋgòrì	'mango'	r.	ø-lógì	'lock'
h.	ø-lámʃì	'orange'	s.	ø-rédjò	'radio'
i.	ø-bjâ	'pear'	t.	ø-mánì	'step sister'
j.	ø-mántʃè	'pineapple'	u.	ø-nòŋsì	'mother-in-law'

### B. Noun class 1b / N-/

Class 1b nouns have a homorganic nasal prefix. Examples of nouns in this sub-class are:

(7) a.	ñ-fò	'chief'
b.	ñ-dímê	'friend/close relation'
c.	ñ-dóò	'husband'
d.	ñ-dìì	'witch'
e.	ñ-jèrê	'thief'
f.	ñ-kùm	'noble'
g.	ñ-fè'èñì	'blind person'
h.	ñ-bwìŋkì	'lame person'
i.	ñ-súkà'à	'friend'
j.	m-û	'child'
k.	m-àŋgjà	'woman'
l.	ŋ-ù	'person'

A very small number of nouns that belong in this class (by virtue of the concord elements they trigger) begin with the vowel à. Examples are *ànsáŋ* 'corn/maize', *àndòŋè* 'sweet potato' *àŋkègè* 'rooster', *àntàbà'à* 'tobacco'. This vowel does not participate in determining concord as the concord elements associated with these nouns are the same as those associated with other nouns in this class which begin with the homorganic nasal consonant (see section 3 for a description of the concord). For this reason, we will treat the initial à as an augment and maintain the following nasal consonant as the class prefix since it is the one that actually determines concord. Notice in passing that the initial vowel à in the singular forms, is not attested in the speech of some speakers. However, it is attested in the plural forms for all speakers, e.g. *bànsáŋ* 'cobs of corn/maize', *bàndòŋè* 'sweet potatoes' *bàŋkègè* 'roosters', *bàntàbà'à* 'tobacco (types of)'.  
 The last three nouns in the examples in (7) 'child', 'woman' and 'person' are irregular forms in the sense that they constitute the few instances in Bafut where a noun stem does not begin with a consonant. The stems of these forms may be regarded as the product of a kind of elision between an earlier prefix and the stem. As we will see immediately below, plural formation also exhibits the same irregularity.

Another irregular noun that should belong in this class is the word for ‘wife’ *ḡgwê*. This noun is never used without a modifier such as possessive or determiner. Also, it has no plural form; rather, the plural form - *bàḡḡjè* ‘women’ is used where ‘wives’ is intended.

## 2.2. Noun class 2 / bî- /

Noun class 2 is the plural class for class 1 nouns. Nouns in this class take the prefix *bî-*. When prefixed to a stem that begins with a vowel, the vowel and tone of the prefix are dropped and the prefix consonant then fuses with the noun stem. Examples of class 2 nouns are:

(8) a.	<i>bî-lú’ú</i>	‘spoons’	k.	<i>bî-fḡ</i>	‘chiefs’
b.	<i>bî-kàrì</i>	‘rings (finger)’	l.	<i>bî-límó</i>	‘friends’
c.	<i>bî-síḡ</i>	‘birds’	m.	<i>bî-lóò</i>	‘husbands’
d.	<i>bî-sòrì</i>	‘witches’	n.	<i>bî-lìḡ</i>	‘witches’
e.	<i>bî-fórí</i>	‘rats’	o.	<i>bî-jèrḡ</i>	‘thieves’
f.	<i>bî-káá</i>	‘crabs’	p.	<i>bî-kùm</i>	‘nobles’
g.	<i>bî-máḡgòrì</i>	‘mangoes’	r.	<i>bî-bwìnkì</i>	‘lame persons’
h.	<i>bî-lámḡ</i>	‘oranges’	s.	<i>bî-fḡ’èḡnì</i>	‘women’
i.	<i>bî-bjâ</i>	‘pears’	t.	<i>bî-tsó’ḡ</i>	‘bodyguards’
j.	<i>bî-mântḡ</i>	‘pineapples’	u.	<i>bî-nḡḡsì</i>	‘female-in-laws’

In forming the plural of the irregular nouns noted in class 1b above in which the nasal prefix is preceded by the vowel *à* the vowel is maintained: *ànsáḡ/bànsáḡ* ‘(cob(s) of) corn/maize’, *àndḡḡḡ/bàndḡḡḡ* ‘sweet potato(es)’ and *àḡkḡḡḡ/bàḡkḡḡḡ* ‘roosters’. In these plural forms, the vowel prefix *ì* is deleted by a general vowel deletion rule which targets one of two vowels in a tautosyllabic sequence. The deletion process in this situation however deviates slightly from the norm: it is generally *V<sub>2</sub>* that is deleted in such contexts but in this case, deletion targets *V<sub>1</sub>*. This is however not surprising since *V<sub>2</sub>* is considered part of the stem and as we know, phonological processes more easily affect prefixes than they do stems/roots.

The plural forms of the irregular nouns noted above in class 1b are as follows: *mû/bḡḡ* ‘child/children’, *màḡḡjè/bàḡḡjè* ‘woman/women/wives’, *ḡù/bḡ* ‘person/people’. Across a wide range of Grassfields bantu languages, these same nouns exhibit similar irregularities. See also Atindogbe (2007) for Coastal Bantu languages.

Proper names form their plural in this class. The plural of proper names is used in one of two ways; either (a) as a regular plural indicating more than one person of the particular name, or (b) to indicate the person and the people who are with him/her, those under his/her charge.

e.g.

<i>nìbà’à</i>	"A Bafut name commonly spelt as Niba/Neba in English Orthography"
<i>bî-nìbà’à</i>	"All persons called Niba"
<i>bî-nìbà’à</i>	"Niba and his people"

## 2.3. Noun class 3



Class 3 nouns are subdivided into subclass 3a and 3b. The two subclasses have different prefixes but the nouns in both classes behave alike with regard to plural formation and agreement marking. Nouns from both subclasses form their plural in class 6. The prefix for class 3a nouns is ì while that of class 3b is N.

*A. Noun class 3a / ì- /*

- (9) a. ì-fâ'â 'job/work/employment'  
 b. ì-sá'â 'case (law court)'  
 c. ì-bò'ò 'mushroom'  
 d. ì-lhî 'ant'  
 e. ì-lèŋ 'shoot of raffia palm'  
 f. ì-bhì 'trunk (of a person)'  
 g. ì-tìhì 'inner strength'  
 h. ì-kòò 'song'  
 i. ì-kùù 'bed'  
 j. ì-kùm 'name'  
 k. ì-kó'ô 'ladder'  
 l. ì-túgì 'night/darkness'  
 m. ì-kxì 'cane'

*B. Noun class 3b / N- /*

- (10) a. ì-bàŋ 'kernel/palm nut'  
 b. ì-báà 'cliff'  
 c. ì-tîhî 'heart'  
 d. ì-tòŋ 'neck'  
 e. ì-gàŋ 'root'  
 f. ì-gárfî 'gun'  
 g. ì-gòò 'porcupine'  
 h. ì-tsù 'mouth'  
 i. ì-dàà 'penis'  
 j. ì-gèè 'gutter'  
 k. ì-sòò 'farm'  
 l. ì-kùù 'tail'  
 m. ì-kxì 'water/stream'  
 n. ì-dèŋ 'metal ring/telephone'  
 o. ì-kìrì 'rope'  
 p. ì-dígfî 'climber stem'

Class 3b and class 1b nouns have some characteristics in common. For instance, they have the same homorganic nasal prefix and they take identical concord elements in many contexts. On the surface, such similarities might suggest that we are dealing with one and the same class. There is however reason to maintain the two as separate classes. First, whereas class 1b nouns form their plural in class 2, class 3b nouns form theirs either in class 6 or class 10. Secondly, the identity in the concord elements that both classes take is only apparent. On the surface it looks like the possessive pronoun for both classes is the same. Compare the possessive for the class 1b nouns in (11A) below to that of the class 3b nouns in (11B).

(11)	A			B		
	<u>Noun class 1b</u>			<u>Noun class 3b</u>		
	m̄-f̄ɔ̄	ɣ-à	‘my chief’	ṅ-tsû	ɣ-â	‘my mouth’
	ṅ-d̄f̄m	ɣ-à	‘my friend’	ṅ-t̄f̄f̄	ɣ-â	‘my heart’
	ṅ-d̄óò	ɣ-à	‘my husband’	ṅ-ḡââṅ	ɣ-â	‘my root’

Though the possessive pronoun in both (11A) and (11B) is segmentally identical, there is a significant difference in the tones. Whereas the class 1b possessive bears a L tone, that of class 3b bears a HL tone.

Another significant difference between the two classes is attested in the morpheme that marks agreement between a noun from any of the two classes and a modifying adjective and quantifier ‘every’. This agreement morpheme is prefixed to the modifier as illustrated below.

(12)	A			B		
	<u>Noun class 1b</u>			<u>Noun class 3b</u>		
	m̄-f̄ɔ̄	j̄ìn-s̄íɡ̄ìn̄ì	‘a nice chief’	ṅ-tsù	j̄î-s̄íɡ̄ín̄ì	‘a nice mouth’
	ṅ-d̄f̄m	j̄ìṅ-k̄è’èt̄ì	‘a small friend’	ṅ-t̄f̄f̄	j̄ì-k̄è’èt̄ì	‘a small heart’
	ṅ-d̄óò	j̄ìm-bh̄î	‘a bad husband’	m̄-b̄àṅ	j̄î-bh̄î	‘a bad kernel’

(13)	A			B		
	<u>Noun class 1b</u>			<u>Noun class 3b</u>		
	m̄-f̄ɔ̄	n-ts̄im	‘every chief’	ṅ-tsù	ø-ts̄im	‘every mouth’
	ṅ-d̄f̄m	n-ts̄im	‘every friend’	ṅ-t̄f̄f̄	ø-ts̄im	‘every heart’
	ṅ-d̄óò	n-ts̄im	‘every husband’	m̄-b̄ăṅ	ø-ts̄im	‘every kernel’

On the one hand, whereas the adjective prefix for class 1b nouns contains a final homorganic nasal consonant, that of class 3b nouns does not. On the other hand, the quantifier ‘every’ takes a homorganic nasal prefix when used with class 1b nouns but takes a null morpheme when used with class 3b nouns.

A last difference between class 1b and class 3b nouns concerns the formation of plurals. While the nasal prefix of class 1b nouns always alternates with the plural prefix of class 2 (m̄-f̄ɔ̄/b̄ì-f̄ɔ̄ ‘chief(s)’) the nasal prefix of class 3b nouns which form their plural in class 6 is inseparable from the stem such that the plural prefix is pre-prefixed to the nasal (ṅ-tsù/m̄-n-tsù ‘mouth(s)').

The fact that nasal (singular) prefix is maintained in the plural form of class 3b nouns raises the ultimate question of whether we should not assign a ø- (null) prefix to this class and treat the nasal as part of the stem. This question also applies to other classes like 9 and 10 which have a nasal prefix. For the purpose of consistency with the Proto-Bantu system and with the description of related Grassfields Bantu languages (Hyman (1980), Welmers (1973)), Ayuninjam (1995) I will maintain the homorganic nasal as the prefix for these classes and simply refer to them as inseparable prefixes which are probably undergoing reanalysis as part of the stem in Bafut and in a wide range of Grassfields Bantu languages.

#### 2.4. Noun class 5 / n̄- /

Class 5 contains quite a good number of the nouns in Bafut. Most body parts and abstract nouns belong in this class. This class also contains many names of objects which normally exist in pairs such as “arm”, “leg”, “twins”, etc. Some examples of nouns in this class are given below.

- |         |         |              |    |          |                         |
|---------|---------|--------------|----|----------|-------------------------|
| (14) a. | nì-lí'î | 'eye'        | k. | nì-dórî  | 'play/joy'              |
| b.      | nì-lwî  | 'nose'       | l. | nì-yè'è  | 'cry'                   |
| c.      | nì-tù'ù | 'hip'        | m. | nì-γàà   | 'speech/language/noise' |
| d.      | nì-sòŋ  | 'tooth'      | n. | nì-bò'ò  | 'pumpkin'               |
| e.      | nì-kà'à | 'leg'        | o. | nì-bàŋ   | 'flute'                 |
| f.      | nì-γà'à | 'jaw'        | p. | nì-mfá'â | 'twin'                  |
| g.      | nì-sá'â | 'buttock'    | q. | nì-dèè   | 'goitre (a disease)'    |
| h.      | nì-tòŋ  | 'navel'      | r. | nì-yó'ò  | 'marriage'              |
| i.      | nì-làŋ  | 'love charm' | s. | nì-kàŋ   | 'barn/sky'              |
| j.      | nì-bò'ò | 'fear'       | t. | nì-wjè   | 'laughter'              |

## 2.5. Noun class 6 / mî- /

Noun class 6, as in many other Bantu languages, has merged Proto-Benue Congo classes 6 and 6a as the membership of this class in Bafut is heterogenous, partly consisting of plurals mainly of class 5 and also of mass nouns. This class also contains the plurals of some class 3, 9 and 19 nouns. Although the majority of mass nouns are contained in this class, others are also found in class 1, some in class 7 and some in class 9. The prefix for class 6 is mî-. Following are examples of class 6 nouns.

- |         |          |                       |    |          |             |
|---------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------|-------------|
| (15) a. | mî-kòrî  | 'feet'                | k. | mî-wàŋ   | 'porridge'  |
| b.      | mî-lwî   | 'nostrils'            | l. | mî-lù'ù  | 'palm wine' |
| c.      | mî-tù'ù  | 'hips'                | m. | mî-γàà   | 'languages' |
| d.      | mî-sòŋ   | 'teeth'               | n. | mî-bò'ò  | 'pumpkins'  |
| e.      | mî-kà'à  | 'legs'                | o. | mî-bàŋ   | 'flutes'    |
| f.      | mî-γà'à  | 'jaws'                | p. | mî-mfá'â | 'twins'     |
| g.      | mî-sá'â  | 'buttocks'            | q. | mî-yó'ò  | 'marriages' |
| h.      | mî-tòŋ   | 'navels'              | r. | mî-bè    | 'liver'     |
| i.      | mî-wúrî  | 'oil'                 | s. | mî-kàŋ   | 'barns'     |
| j.      | mî-kàà   | 'gun powder'          | t. | mî-ŋgòò  | 'plantains' |
| k.      | mî-lîŋnî | 'sorrow/pity/sadness' |    |          |             |

At times, in front of some oral consonants such as b and k, the prefix loses its vowel and the nasal homorganises with the stem oral consonant. In some cases, the root-initial consonant is deleted along with the prefix vowel making it difficult to separate the prefix from the stem. This is illustrated below.

- |         |           |   |             |           |
|---------|-----------|---|-------------|-----------|
| (16) a. | /mî-bîî/  | → | [ m̩-bîî ]  | 'breasts' |
| b.      | /mî-kwéé/ | → | [ ŋ̩-kwéé ] | 'arms'    |
| c.      | /mî-lí'î/ | → | [ m̩-í'î ]  | 'eyes'    |

This process is not general (compare the examples in (16) to those in (15a, e, j, n, o, r, and s). Given that this change does not apply in all contexts in this class, it would not be very plausible

to attribute it to a synchronic phonological process. I rather suggest that some nouns such as those in (16) are undergoing a major revision which, with time, might end in a change in the morphological class.

## 2.6. Noun class 7 / à- /

The prefix for noun class 7 is à which seems to have been adopted from the Proto-Bantu class 12 prefix ka with a subsequent loss of the initial consonant. The concord system however does not resemble either that of Proto-Bantu class 7 or class 12. Class 7 contains the largest number of nouns in Bafut. Some body parts and household utensils fall within this class. It is also composed of nouns designating material objects, instruments and vegetation. The class also contains abstract nouns designating a state, e.g. ‘idleness’, ‘nothingness’, etc. A substantial number of nouns in this class form their plural in class 8.

(17) a.	à-bà’à	‘door’	k.	à-bóríkì	‘laziness’
b.	à-ləŋ	‘chair’	l.	à-dàŋə̀dàŋə̀	‘nothingness’
c.	à-bè’è	‘shoulder’	m.	à-lè̀entì	‘stupidity’
d.	à-kòrì	‘foot’	n.	à-bə̀rì	‘a fool’
e.	à-tû	‘head’	o.	à-bà̀rê	‘madness, mad person’
f.	à-kâŋ	‘pan’	p.	à-tsá’â	‘rudeness, disrespect’
g.	à-sô	‘hoe’	r.	à-là’à	‘wound’
h.	à-kôŋ	‘umbrella’	s.	à-lá’â	‘village/country’
i.	à-bô	‘hand’	t.	à-bù’ù	‘slave’
j.	à-dòò	‘groin’	u.	à-lò’ò	‘curse’

## 2.7. Noun class 8 / ï- /

Class 8 seems to have merged Proto-Bantu classes 8 and 13. The merger resulted in the retention (and subsequent modification) of the Proto-Bantu class 13 prefix i and the class 8 concord system. Bafut Class 8 is the plural class for class 7 nouns. The prefix for this class is ï which is, coincidentally, identical in form to the prefix of class 3a. The two, however, differ in function: whereas the ï of class 3a marks the singular form, that of class 8 marks the plural. In addition to this, both differ with respect to the agreement morpheme they trigger in larger nominal constructions. The following are examples of class 8 nouns.

(18) a.	ï-bà’à	‘doors’	k.	ï-bà̀à	‘bags’
b.	ï-ləŋ	‘chairs’	l.	ï-tóê	‘calabashes’
c.	ï-bè’è	‘shoulders’	m.	ï-lè̀entì	‘stupid persons’
d.	ï-bù̀ù	‘ridges’	n.	ï-bə̀rì	‘fools’
e.	ï-tû	‘heads’	o.	ï-bà̀rê	‘mad persons’
f.	ï-kâŋ	‘pans’	p.	ï-tà’à	‘snails’
g.	ï-sô	‘hoes’	r.	ï-là’à	‘wounds’
h.	ï-kôŋ	‘umbrellas’	s.	ï-lá’â	‘villages/countries’
i.	ï-bâŋ	‘cliffs’	t.	ï-bù’ù	‘slaves’
j.	ï-dòò	‘groins’	u.	ï-lò’ò	‘curses’

## 2.8. Noun class 9 / N- /

Class 9 contains mostly animal names. This class has the same homorganic nasal prefix as classes 1b and 3b. The three classes however differ in plural formation and in the agreement patterns they provoke in larger nominal constructions. The following are examples of class 9 nouns.

- |         |        |              |    |        |                     |
|---------|--------|--------------|----|--------|---------------------|
| (19) a. | m̄-bû  | ‘dog’        | g. | ñ-dʒà  | ‘soup’              |
| b.      | m̄-bî  | ‘goat/sheep’ | h. | ñ-fê   | ‘soil/ground/earth’ |
| c.      | ŋ-kàà  | ‘monkey’     | i. | ñ-dâ   | ‘house’             |
| d.      | m̄-bà  | ‘meat’       | j. | ñ-dzôŋ | ‘thorn’             |
| e.      | ŋ-gwû  | ‘chicken’    | k. | n-àà   | ‘animal’            |
| f.      | ñ-dzàà | ‘axe’        | l. | n-ô    | ‘snake’             |

## 2.9. Noun class 10 / N- /

Class 10 is the plural class for nouns in class 9. Some nouns in classes 3, 7 and 19 also form their plural in this class. Class 10 has the same prefix as classes 9, 1b and 3b but it is treated as a separate class first because it is a plural class and second because it takes a set of concord elements different from those of any of the other classes. The examples below are class 10 nouns.

- |         |        |                  |    |          |                 |
|---------|--------|------------------|----|----------|-----------------|
| (20) a. | m̄-bû  | ‘dogs’           | g. | ñ-dá’á   | ‘swallow birds’ |
| b.      | m̄-bî  | ‘goats/sheep’    | h. | ñ-sààkèè | ‘frogs’         |
| c.      | ŋ-kàà  | ‘monkeys’        | i. | ñ-dâ     | ‘houses’        |
| d.      | m̄-bàŋ | ‘nuts/kernels’   | j. | ñ-dzôŋ   | ‘thorns’        |
| e.      | ŋ-gwû  | ‘chickens/fowls’ | k. | n-àà     | ‘animals’       |
| f.      | ñ-dzàà | ‘axes’           | l. | n-ô      | ‘snakes’        |

As we observe from these examples, the prefixes of class 10 nouns are identical to class 9 nouns. The singular/plural distinction is signaled only by the concord elements, raised intonation on the noun stem and at times by context of use.

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter (see section 2.3) although the prefix of class 9 nouns does not change in the plural form, we have decided to maintain the nasal consonant as the prefix of classes 9 and 10 for the sake of consistency with the Proto-Bantu system and with the description of related Grassfields Bantu languages (Hyman (1980), Welmers (1973)), Ayuninjam (1995) I will maintain the homorganic nasal as the prefix for these classes and simply refer to them as inseparable prefixes which are probably undergoing reanalysis as part of the stem in Bafut and in a wide range of Grassfields Bantu languages.

## 2.10 Noun class 19 / fî- /

Most nouns that refer to diminutives and long objects belong in this class. The majority of nouns form their plural in class 6. Others form theirs in class 10. The prefix of this class is fî-

- |         |          |        |    |        |             |
|---------|----------|--------|----|--------|-------------|
| (21) a. | fî-ndzôô | ‘toad’ | g. | fî-kùù | ‘small bed’ |
|---------|----------|--------|----|--------|-------------|



3	a) b)	ĩ- N-	ɣ´- ɣ´-				
5		nì- 7	n´- à- j´-		6	mì- 8	m´- ì- dz´-
9		N-	j`- 19		10	N-	dz´-
		fì- 19	f´- f´-				

In the table, the noun classes, noun prefixes and concord consonants are indicated. Following each concord consonant is a floating tone associated with the class. The concord consonants and the related floating tones will be treated in greater detail in the next section. Full lines in the table indicate major genders while broken lines indicate minor genders. The following paired genders therefore exist in Bafut:

Major genders: 1/2, 3/6, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 19/6.

Minor genders: 3b/10, 7/6, 7/10, 9/6, 19/10

The semantic contents of the classes and genders vary a lot making it difficult to give a general semantic characterization of any particular class or gender. However, considering related studies (Hyman ed. (1981), Leroy (1977b) and Ayuninjam (1998)), the following general semantic relationships can be posited for the different classes/genders in Bafut:

Humans:	1b/2
Loan words:	1a/2
Animals/Birds:	9/10, 1/2, 7/8
Insects:	3/6, 7/8, 9/10
Abstracts:	7
Mass/Liquids:	6
Body parts:	5/6, 7/8
Gerunds:	9
Vegetation:	7/8
Diminutives:	19/6
Heavenly bodies:	1/2, 9, 19/6

Following are examples of nouns in the different genders.

### 3.1. Major genders

#### (i) Gender 1/2 (humans, animals, borrowed words)

(23) a.	m-fɔ̃/bì-fɔ̃	‘chief(s)’	j.	ø-fórí/bì-fórí	‘rat(s)’
b.	ñ-dim/bì-lim	‘friend(s)’	k.	ø-sínj/bì-sínj	‘bird(s)’
c.	ñ-dòdò/bì-lóò	‘husband(s)’	l.	ø-káá/bì-káá	‘crab(s)’
d.	ñ-dìì/bì-lìì	‘witch(es)’	m.	ø-lónjé/bì-lónjé	‘horse(s)’
e.	ñ-yàrâ/bì-yàrâ	‘thief/thieves’	n.	ø-filáwà/bì-filáwà	‘flower(s)’
f.	ñ-kùm/bì-kùm	‘ambassador(s)’	o.	ø-tábèrì/bì-tábèrì	‘table(s)’
g.	m-û/b-óò	‘child(ren)’	p.	ø-bíngísì/bì-bíngísì	‘hinge(s)’

h.	m-àṅgǰè/b-àṅgǰè	‘woman/women’	r.	ø-lógì/bì-lógì	(door) ‘lock(s)’
i.	ṅ-ù/b-è	‘person(s)’	s.	ø-máṅgòrì/bì-máṅgòrì	‘mango(es)’

(ii) Gender 3/6 (Insects, assorted words)

(24) a.	ì-fà’à/mì-fà’à	‘job(s)’	k.	ì-kòò/mì-kòò	"song(s)"
b.	ì-sá’á/mì-sá’á	‘case(s) (law court)’	l.	ì-kùù/mì-kùù	"bed(s)"
c.	ì-bò’ò/mì-bò’ò	‘mushroom(s)’	m.	ì-kùm/mì-kùm	"name(s)"
d.	ì-lhî/mì-lhî	‘ant(s)’	n.	ì-túgì/mì-túgì	"night(s)"
e.	ì-lèṅ/mì-lèṅ	‘shoot(s) palm(s)’	of o.	ì-kó’ò/mì-kó’ò	‘ladder(s)’
f.	ṅ-báâ/mì-mbáâ	‘cliff(s)’	p.	ṅ-tsù/mì-ntsù	"mouth(s)"
g.	ṅ-tîî/mì-ntîî	‘heart(s)’	q.	ṅ-sòò/mì-nsòò	‘farm(s)’
h.	ṅ-tòṅ/mì-ntòṅ	‘neck(s)’	r.	ṅ-tò/mì-ntò	‘bud/young shoot(s)’
i.	ṅ-gárî/mì-ṅgárî	‘gun(s)’	s.	ṅ-kùù/mì-ṅkùù	"tail(s)"
j.	ṅ-gàṅ/mì-ṅgàṅ	"root(s)"	t.	ṅ-kìrì/mì-ṅkìrì	"rope(s)"

(iii) Gender 5/6 (body parts and assorted nouns)

(25) a.	nì-kwéê/ṅ-kwéê	‘arm(s)’	k.	nì-dórì/mì-dórì	‘play(s)’
b.	nì-lwî/mì-lwî	‘nose(s)’	l.	nì-yè’è/mì-yè’è	‘cry’
c.	nì-tù’ù/mì-tù’ù	‘hip(s)’	m.	nì-ghàà/mì-ghàà	‘speche(s)/language(s)’
d.	nì-sòṅ/mì-sòṅ	‘tooth/teeth’	n.	nì-bò’ò/mì-bò’ò	‘pumpkin(s)’
e.	nì-kà’á/mì-kà’á	‘leg(s)’	o.	nì-bàṅ/mì-bàṅ	‘flute(s)’
f.	nì-tòṅ/mì-tòṅ	‘navel(s)’	p.	nì-fùrì/mì-fùrì	‘feather(s)’
g.	nì-gò/mì-gò	‘chest(s)’	q.	nì-kòṅ/mì-kòṅ	‘spear(s)’
h.	nì-bà/mì-bà	‘wing(s)’	r.	nì-kìṅ/mì-kìṅ	‘pipe(s)(tobacco)’
i.	nì-sá’á/mì-sá’á	‘buttock(s)’	s.	nì-wèè/mì-wèè	‘pebble(s)/ice block’
j.	nì-yà’á/mì-yà’á	‘jaw(s)’	t.	nì-kúù/mì-kúù	‘bean(s)’

(iv) Gender 7/8 (body parts, household utensils, birds, insects, vegetation, etc.)

(26) a.	à-dòò/ì-dòò	‘groin(s)’	k.	à-kíkúṅ/ì-kíkúṅ	‘owl(s)’
b.	à-tìì/ì-tìì	‘waist(s)’	l.	à-ntswáṅḡ/ì-ntswáṅḡ	‘dirt-eating bird(s)’
c.	à-bè’è/ì-bè’è	‘shoulder(s)’	m.	à-lílóó/ì-lílóó	‘bat(s)’
d.	à-tòṅnì/ì-tòṅnì	‘ear(s)’	n.	à-ntsínḡ/ì-ntsínḡ	‘cricket(s)’
e.	à-tù/ì-tù	‘head(s)’	o.	à-mbénwû/ì-mbénwû	‘honey bee(s)’
f.	à-kâṅ/ì-kâṅ	‘pan(s)’	p.	à-bòò/ì-bòò	‘weevil(s)’
g.	à-sô/ì-sô	‘hoe(s)’	q.	à-fù/ì-fù	‘leaf/medicine(s)’
h.	à-kòṅ/ì-kòṅ	‘umbrella(s)’	r.	à-tì/ì-tì	‘tree(s)/stick(s)’
i.	à-tóò/ì-tóò	‘calabash(es)’	s.	à-yú’ù/ì-dzú’ù	‘yam(s)’
j.	à-bàà/ì-bàà	‘bag(s)’	t.	à-sìsòṅ/ì-sìsòṅ	‘elephant grass’



(v) Gender 9/10 (Animals, birds, assorted nouns)

(27) a.	m-bû/m-bû	‘dog(s)’	k.	n-àà/n-àà	‘animal(s)’
b.	m-bî/m-bî	‘goat/sheep(s)’	l.	n-fê/n-fê	‘soil/ground/earth’
c.	ñ-kàà/ñ-kàà	‘monkey(s)’	m.	n-dâ/n-dâ	‘house(s)’
d.	m-bìn/m-bìn	‘penis’	n.	n-ô/n-ô	‘snake(s)’
e.	ñ-gjâ/ñ-gjâ	‘antelope(s)’	o.	n-dôñ/n-dôñ	‘cup(s)’
f.	ñ-gwû/ñ-gwû	‘chicken(s)’	p.	n-dùù/n-dùù	‘hammer(s)’
g.	n-dá’â/n-dá’â	‘swallow bird(s)’	q.	n-tó’ô/n-tó’ô	‘palace(s)’
h.	n-jà/n-jà	‘soup’	r.	ñ-kòm/ñ-kòm	‘box(es)’
i.	n-dzàà/n-dzàà	‘axe(s)’	s.	m-bòñ/m-bòñ	‘bull(s)’
j.	n-dzôñ/n-dzôñ	‘thorn(s)’	t.	ñ-kèñ/ñ-kèñ	‘type of plant’

(vi) Gender 19/6 (Diminutives)

(28) a.	fì-ndzóò/mì-ndzóò	‘toad(s)’	f.	fì-nsân/mì-nsân	‘broom(s)’
b.	fì-kùù/mì-kùù	‘small bed(s)’	g.	fì-ntsùm/mì-ntsùm	‘small drum(s)’
c.	fì-ñgêê/mì-ñgêê	‘small cane(s)’	h.	fì-ñkóbì/mì-ñkóbì	‘statue(s)’
d.	fì-ndzòñ/mì-ndzòñ	‘star(s)’	i.	fì-rínjì/mì-rínjì	‘housefly(ies)’
e.	fì-ntà/mì-ntà	‘fruit(s)’			

3.2. Minor genders

Minor genders consist of much fewer words than the major genders above. They are probably of closed classes.

(vii) Gender 3b/10 (assorted nouns)

(29) a.	m-bàñ/m-bàñ	‘kernel(s)’
b.	n-dóññî/n-dóññî	‘bamboo(es)’
c.	ñ-gòò/ñ-gòò	‘porcupine(s)’
d.	ñ-kâm/ñ-kâm	‘million(s)’
e.	n-sòñ/n-sòñ	‘middle/spine/center(s)’

(viii) Gender 7/6 (assorted nouns)

(30) a.	à-kòrì/mì-kòrì	‘foot/feet’
b.	à-fâ’â/mì-fâ’â	‘job(s)’
c.	à-kù’ùtì/mì-kù’ùtì	‘knee(s)’
d.	à-dà’â/mì-dà’â	‘energy’
e.	à-kàà/mì-kàà	‘oath/testament(s)’

(ix) Gender 7/10 (assorted nouns)

(31) a.	à-jóò/ñ-dzóò-	‘thing(s)’
b.	à-ñgáá/ñ-gáá	‘spider(s)’

- c. à-mbà/m-bà ‘boil/abscess(es)’

### 3.3. Single class genders

Nouns that are always either in the singular only or in the plural only are found in all classes in Bafut. In this section however, we present only those single class genders that have a reasonable number of nouns in them.

#### (xi) Gender 6 (Liquid and mass nouns)

- (33) a. mî-wàŋ ‘porridge’  
 b. mî-lù’ù ‘palm wine’  
 c. mî-wúrî ‘oil’  
 d. mî-kòò ‘juju’  
 e. mî-wìntì ‘goose pimples’

#### (xii) Gender 9 (Gerunds)

All gerunds fall within this gender

- (34) a. ñ-dòrê ‘(the act of) playing’  
 b. ñ-fêê ‘(the act of) slapping’  
 c. ñ-kòŋê ‘(the act of) loving’  
 d. ñ-kwèrê ‘(the act of) taking’  
 e. ñ-dàŋsê ‘(the act of) crossing’

#### (xiii) Gender 5 (Gerundials)

- (35) a. nî-γàà ‘speech/language’  
 b. nî-táê ‘walk’  
 c. nî-wyè ‘laughter’  
 d. nî-tsó’ê ‘wildness’  
 e. nî-yè’è ‘cry’

## 4. Concord system

Each of the noun classes presented above is associated with a particular nominal prefix and with a distinctive pattern of agreement borne by modifiers and arguments of the noun. Thus the form of the noun related word (modifiers and arguments) especially the initial consonant is determined by the class of the head noun such that each noun class will command the same concord prefixes or morphemes. The table below presents the concord consonants (CC) or prefixes of the following noun related words that are determinant in the classification of nouns in Bafut: the possessive morpheme (Poss) ‘my’, the interrogative pronoun (Int.) ‘which’, the adjective (Adj) ‘huge/big/superior’ and the demonstrative determiner (Dem) ‘that’. The subject marker (SM) is also included. The concord segment is separated from the root by a hyphen.

Table II: Bafut concord prefixes

N. Cl	Sample Noun	Noun Cl. Prefix	Poss “my”	Int. “which”	Quant. “all/every”	Adj “big/huge”	Dem “that (FSL)”	SM
1a.	wíndò	∅-	γ-à	w-úú	n-tsìm	jíŋ-wì	w-íî	à
b.	m̃fɔ̃	N-	γ-à	w-úú	n-tsìm	jíŋ-wì	w-íî	à
2.	bìwíndò	bì-	b-â	b-úú	bí-tsìm	bí-wì	b-íî	bí
3a.	ìkùù	ì-	γ-â	w-úú	í-tsìm	jî-wì	w-íî	í
b.	ŋgáɾì	N-	γ-â	w-úú	í-tsìm	jî-wì	w-íî	í
5.	nìbɔ̀’ɔ̀	nì-	n-â	n-úú	ní-tsìm	ní-wì	n-íî	ní
6.	mì-bɔ̀’ɔ̀	mì-	m-â	m-úú	mí-tsìm	mí-wì	m-íî	mí
7.	àkáj	à-	j-â	j-úú	à-tsìm	jì-wì	j-íî	á
8.	ìkáj	ì-	dz-â	dʒ-úú	ì-tsìm	dʒì-wì	dʒ-íî	dʒí
9.	ŋkàà	N-	j-â	j-úú	n-tsìm	jíŋ-wì	j-íî	ì
10.	ŋkàà	N-	dz-â	dʒ-úú	í-tsìm	dʒî-wì	dʒ-íî	dʒí
19.	fìkùù	fì-	f-â	f-úú	fì-tsìm	fí-wì	f-íî	fí

There are three kinds of concord elements: CVC, CV, V and C. The CVC concord element is attested only in adjectives (numerals pattern with adjectives) used to modify classes 1 and 9 nouns. The vowel concord element which occurs on the quantifier “all/every” usually gets deleted when the preceding noun ends in a vowel. Vowel deletion of this type targeting the second vowel in a tautosyllabic sequence is very common in Bafut as noted earlier on in section 3.1. The CV element could be an oral or nasal consonant. The latter generally assimilates to the place features of a following oral stop. In addition to the variation according to noun class illustrated in the table above, the concord element for the possessive pronoun also differs with person and number for some of the classes. Thus for instance, ‘my chief’ is *m̃-fɔ̃ γ-à*, ‘his/her chief’ is *m̃-fɔ̃ j-ì* and ‘their chief’ is *m̃-fɔ̃ w-àà*. This variation will be treated more fully in chapter 4.

The concord consonants of classes 8 and 10 are identical. We however observe differences in the tones in some cases. Apart from the high-low differences on the adjective and demonstrative, there is a general tendency for the high of class 10 in the possessive and interrogative to be stepped (lowered).

## Conclusion

In classifying the nouns in this chapter, we relied principally on the morphological criteria in which the noun class is conceived of as a group of nouns that provoke an identical pattern of agreement on noun modifiers. We observed that the semantic criteria which also played a role in the classification of nouns in Proto-Bantu does not play a major role in the classification of Bafut nouns. The fact that the nouns do not pattern into any regular semantic classes is a common feature of Grassfields Bantu languages. Noun classes 3b, 9 and 10 in Bafut remain a source of contention. Because the homorganic nasal prefix in the singular forms remains unchanged in the plural form, some analysts (e.g. Mutaka (pc)) think that it is more reasonable to treat class 9 as a subpart of class 1 with a null prefix. This idea is worth considering but the question remains about what to do with the related plural forms. In fact, a number of problems persist in the classification of nouns in Grassfields Bantu languages in general using the traditional

morphological criteria. In the face of these problems, one might begin to take seriously Niba's (2007) idea of classifying nouns into tone classes and not morphological classes.

## Chapter 3 Noun formation

### Introduction

Two major processes are involved in the formation of nouns in Bafut. These are derivation and compounding. Derivation involves attaching a prefix to a root which, most often, belongs to a different word category (e.g. a verb root) while compounding entails combining two independent words, one of which must be a noun, to produce a new noun with a composite meaning. The present chapter examines the different processes employed in derivation and compounding. We will present the form, meaning and distribution of the prefixes used in derivation and also provide an analysis of compounding as a word formation process in Bafut.

### 1. Derivation

Derived nominals in Bafut may be classified into five types based on the type of derivational prefix and on the categorial status of the root involved. These classes of derived nouns are: deverbatives, agentive nouns, augmentatives, diminutives and negative nominals.

#### 1.1. Deverbatives

As the name suggests, deverbatives are nouns formed from verb stems. The derivation here involves prefixing an ordinary noun class prefix to the verb root and a corresponding modification of the tone pattern of the verb stem. The noun class prefixes that are commonly used to derive nouns from verbs are: à- (cl.7), nì- (cl.5), N- (cl.9) and their corresponding plurals ì- (cl.8), mì- (cl.6), and N- (cl.10). In each case, the nouns thus formed indicate one of four things:

- (i) an instrument with which the action signified by the verb is performed e.g. *ḡ-kjà* ‘comb’ from *kjàà* ‘comb one’s hair’,
- (ii) the result of the action signified by the verb, e.g. *à-kwí’í* ‘an answer/a reply’, from *kwí’í* ‘answer/reply/respond!’
- (iii) an abstract idea conveyed by the verb e.g. *nìjím* ‘stinginess/greed’ from *jímḡ* ‘refuse one something’,
- (iv) the experiencer of the action/state conveyed by the verb, e.g. *m̀bwìnkì* ‘lame person’ from *bwìnkḡ* ‘get/become lame’,
- (v) the agent of the action conveyed by the verb, e.g. *̀̀l̀̀ḡ* ‘one who taps palm wine’ from *l̀̀ḡḡ* ‘tap palm wine’.

Some examples of deverbatives are listed below under the different noun prefixes along with the corresponding verb root. The verbs from which the nouns are derived are presented in the imperative form since this is the least inflected form of the verb in the language (as we will see in chapter 7, imperatives are marked by a high tone but in terms of segmental morphology, the imperative is the least inflected form).

### A. The prefix *à-*

- |        |                 |                      |      |               |                          |
|--------|-----------------|----------------------|------|---------------|--------------------------|
| (1) a. | <i>à-kwúsì</i>  | "lead/cover"         | from | <i>kwúsê</i>  | "cover!"                 |
| b.     | <i>à-bú'û</i>   | "drum stick"         | from | <i>bú'û</i>   | "hit/play (drum)!"       |
| c.     | <i>à-sò'ò</i>   | "ladle/spoon"        | from | <i>sò'ò</i>   | "scoop out!"             |
| d.     | <i>à-nô</i>     | "chief's cup"        | from | <i>nô</i>     | "drink!"                 |
|        |                 |                      |      |               |                          |
| (2) a. | <i>à-kwí'î</i>  | "answer/reply"       | from | <i>kwí'î</i>  | "answer/reply!"          |
| b.     | <i>à-bîn</i>    | "dance"              | from | <i>bínê</i>   | "dance!"                 |
| c.     | <i>à- bí'î</i>  | "load"               | from | <i>bí'î</i>   | "carry!"                 |
| d.     | <i>à-lò'ò</i>   | "curse"              | from | <i>lò'ò</i>   | "curse!"                 |
|        |                 |                      |      |               |                          |
| (3) a. | <i>à-kòŋnì</i>  | "love"               | from | <i>kòŋê</i>   | "like/love!"             |
| b.     | <i>à-kwétî</i>  | "help"               | from | <i>kwétê</i>  | "help!"                  |
| c.     | <i>à-bí'ísì</i> | "deceit"             | from | <i>bí'ísê</i> | "deceive!"               |
| d.     | <i>à-ɣə'ənì</i> | "jealousy/envy"      | from | <i>ɣə'ənê</i> | "be jealous/jealous of"  |
|        |                 |                      |      |               |                          |
| (4) a. | <i>à-tîrì</i>   | "stupid/dumb person" | from | <i>tîrìnê</i> | "behave foolishly!"      |
| b.     | <i>à-tîftû</i>  | "headiness"          | from | <i>tîftû</i>  | "be heady!"              |
| c.     | <i>à-kwàrì</i>  | "prostitute"         | from | <i>kwàrê</i>  | "play about carelessly!" |

The examples in (1) indicate the instrument with which the action signified by the verb is carried out while those in (2) represent the result of the action signified by the verb. The ones in (3) indicate the abstract idea expressed by the verb and those in (4) indicate the patient/experiencer of the action/state implied in the verb.

A number of tone changes are noticed. Generally, following H tones are lowered (stepped) by the L on the noun prefix; /*kwétê*/ → [*à-↓kwétî*]. The HHL pattern on verbs changes to HL in the derived noun stem. The LLHL pattern in verbs is realised as LLL on the derived noun stem (see Niba 2008 for a more illuminating discussion of such tone changes). The L-HL tone pattern on some of these nouns distinguishes them from ordinary class 7 nouns which generally bear either a L-LL or L-HHL tone pattern. The fact that the HL pattern which we find on the stems of some of these nouns is normally a characteristic of verbs gives us an insight into the direction of derivation: nouns from verbs and not verbs from nouns. Also notice that some of the nouns end in *nì*, *sì*, *tì*, etc. (see the examples in (3)). As we will see later in chapter 6, phonological variants of these morphemes, *nê*, *sê*, *tê* are regular verb extensions in the language. This is another fact which points to the observation that we are deriving nouns from verbs and not verbs from nouns.

### B. The prefix *nì-*

The prefix *nì-*, which is the prefix for ordinary class 5 nouns is used to derive nouns which indicate either the result of an action implied in a verb or an abstract idea corresponding to the meaning conveyed by the verb.

- |        |                |            |      |             |                |
|--------|----------------|------------|------|-------------|----------------|
| (5) a. | <i>nì-jè'è</i> | "cry"      | from | <i>jè'ê</i> | "cry!"         |
| b.     | <i>nì-wjè</i>  | "laughter" | from | <i>wjèê</i> | "laugh!"       |
| c.     | <i>nì-jó'ò</i> | "marriage" | from | <i>jó'ò</i> | "get married!" |

d. nì-γàà	"speech/language"	from	γàâ	"speak/talk!"
e. nì-γòò	"illness"	from	γòò	"fall ill"
f. nì-dórî	"play/game/joke"	from	dórê	"play!"
g. nì-jîm	"stinginess"	from	jîmê	"be stingy!"

### C. The prefix î-

This is the prefix for ordinary class 3a nouns. It can be used to derive the following nouns from verbs:

(6) a. î-fâ'â	"work/employment"	from	fâ'â	"work!"
b. î-sá'â	"case (law court)"	from	sá'â	"judge/rule"
c. î-lèŋ	"raffia palm shoot"	from	lèŋê	"tap palm wine"
	"palm wine source"			

### D. The prefix N-

The class 9 N- prefix can be used to derive nouns which could indicate instrument, result, abstract idea, or experiencer of an action. On the other hand, the cl 1 N- prefix is used to derive nouns that refer to the agent or theme of the action expressed by the verb. Nouns derived with the class 1 prefix generally refer to persons/professions. In (7) below, the examples from (a - e) illustrate derivations with the class 9 prefix while those in (f - i) illustrate derivations with the class 1 prefix.

(7) a. ñ-kjà	"comb"	from	kjàâ	"comb!"
b. ñ-kà'â	"agreement/plan"	from	kà'â	"agree/plan!"
c. ñ-kwêfð	"evening"	from	kwéé	"return from farm!"
			(â)-fð	
d. ñ-bègîtî	"insult"	from	bègîtê	"insult!"
e. ñ-lwíntòŋ	"anger"	from	lwísí ntóŋ	"get angry!"
f. ñ-lèŋ	"palm wine tapper"	from	lèŋê	"tap palm wine!"
g. ñ-tsú'û	"healer"	from	tsú'û	"heal/treat disease!"
h. ñ-tóô	"messenger"	from	tóô	"send!"
i. ñ-lwìn	"old person"	from	lwìnê	"get old!"

In the formation of deverbatives in Bafut, it is not often easy to attribute a particular meaning to a specific prefix. Thus for instance, the prefix â- can denote the instrument with which an action is carried out, the ultimate result of some action, the abstract idea expressed by the verb, a state, etc.

It is also not evident, in the formation of deverbatives, what determines the noun class prefix which a particular verb root takes. We have observed that some verb roots take the prefix â-, some take N-, some take î- while others take nî-. There seems to be a general tendency for intransitive verbs to take the nî- prefix. The use of either the â-, or the N- prefixes seems to be conditioned by the semantic function that the underlying verb would assign to its object NP. Thus, whereas verbs which would assign a *Theme* theta role to its object NP take the N- prefix, those that would assign a *Patient* or *Beneficiary* theta role to their object NPs take the â-. I should however point out here that the situation is not that clear as verbs which we expect (by the

criteria outlined here) to take one prefix rather than the other. This is however not very surprising given the situation with noun class membership in the group of Bantu languages that Bafut belongs to. Nouns which normally should belong to a particular class (based on the criteria for noun class membership in Proto-Bantu languages) rather belong in other classes.

## 1.2. Agentive nouns

What I have decided to call *agentive nouns* in Bafut divide into two categories; (i) a category of nouns very similar in interpretation to the possessive-ing gerund in English, (ii) a category of nouns that refer to the agent of the action expressed by the verb. Agentive nouns in Bafut are formed by prefixing a homorganic nasal consonant to a verb root. This nominalization prefix in the category (i) nouns is similar in form and behavior to the prefix of ordinary class 9 nouns while that of category (ii) nouns is similar to the prefix of ordinary class 1b nouns. The verb root can be transitive or intransitive. In the former case, the object of the verb root obligatorily accompanies the derived noun except in cases where the object is directly implied in the meaning of the verb. The examples in (8iii) below specifically signify agents of the action.

### (8) (i). Intransitive verb roots

a.	m̄-bwîi	"sleeping (the act/manner of)"	from	bwîi	"sleep!"
b.	n̄-lû	"jumping (the act/manner of)"	from	lû	"jump!"
c.	ŋ-kxèê	"running (the act/manner of)"	from	kxèê	"run!"
d.	ŋ-wòô	"falling (the act/manner of)"	from	Wòô	"fall!"
e.	n̄-zîi	"coming (the act/manner of)"	from	zîi	"come!"
f.	ŋ-yèê	"going (the act/manner of)"	from	yèê	"go!"

### (ii) Transitive verb roots

a.	n̄-láá m̄kúú				
	N-cook beans	"(the act/manner of) cooking beans"	from	láá	"cook!"
b.	m̄-bòó n-dá				
	N-build house	"(the act/manner of) building houses/house building"	from	bóó	"build!"
c.	ŋ-kǎŋ f̄i-bwè				
	N-fry fish	"the act/manner of) frying fish/fish frying"	from	kǎŋ	"fry!"
d.	ŋ-lǎŋ m̄-lù'ù				
		"the act/manner of) tapping palm wine/palm wine tapping"	from	lǎŋ	"tap palm wine!"

### (iii) Personal nouns

a.	m̄-bòó n-dá	"builder"	from	bóó	"build!"
b.	m̄-fîi m-bà	"meat merchant"	from	fîi	"sell!"
c.	ŋ-kòó m̄-ŋkóbì	"wood carver"	from	kóó	"carve!"
d.	n̄-wà m-bà	"butcher"	from	wǎ	"slaughter"





root. They subdivide into two classes depending on the syntactic category of the lexical root. *Noun-based negative nominals* take a noun root while *Verb-based negative nominals* take a verb root.

### 1.3.1 Noun-based negative nominals

The nominals that fall in this class are comprised of a nominal prefix, the negative particle, and a noun root. This class contains a very small set of nouns. They take the ordinary noun class 1a zero prefix in the singular and the class 2 *bì-* prefix in the plural. The root itself is an ordinary noun from another noun class whose prefix has been re-analyzed as part of the stem. Some examples of noun-based negative nominals are listed below. I highlight the prefix which has been re-analyzed as part of the stem. (The vowel prefix of "name" in the first example is deleted in output form).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (11) a. $\emptyset$ -tì- <b>ì</b> kùm<br>Pref-Neg-name<br>'A non-title holder (commoner)' | <b>b</b> ì-tì- <b>ì</b> kùm<br>Pref-Neg-name<br>'Non-title holders (commoners)'    |
| b. $\emptyset$ -tì- <b>nts</b> ù<br>Pref-Neg-mouth<br>'One who does not speak out.'       | <b>b</b> ì-tì- <b>nts</b> ù<br>Pref-Neg-mouth<br>'People who do not speak out.'    |
| c. $\emptyset$ -tì- <b>n</b> ìl'í'<br>Pref-Neg-eye<br>'One who makes poor judgement.'     | <b>b</b> ì-tì- <b>n</b> ìl'í'<br>Pref-Neg-eye<br>'People who make poor judgement.' |

In addition to showing a singular/plural distinction as illustrated above, the nouns in this class take ordinary nominal modifiers such as adjectives and determiners and also have the same external distribution as ordinary nouns/NPs. These characteristics are illustrated in (12a-c).

- (12) a. *bìtikùm bísígìnì bjâ*  
           bì-tì-kùm    bì-sígìnì    bj-á  
           Pref-Neg-name    Pref-nice    Pref-the  
           'The nice commoners.'
- b. *bìtikùm bísígìnì bjá bí kì jô mfô.*  
           bì-tì-kùm    bì-sígìnì    bj-á    bí    kì    jô    m-fô  
           Pref-Neg-name    nice            the    SM    P2    see    chief  
           'The nice commoners petitioned to the chief.'
- c. *môfô kì jô bìtikùm bísígìnì byâ.*  
           m-fô    à    kì    jô    bì-tì-kùm    bì-sígìnì    bj-á  
           chief    SM    P2    see    Pref-Neg-name    Pref-nice    Pref-the  
           'The chief granted audience to the nice commoners.'

We notice then that noun-based negative nominals exhibit characteristics of pure nominals. Considering the fact that the derivation of these nominals is not very productive and that the product of each derivation is an idiomatic expression, it is reasonable to think that they are a sort of synthetic compounds. As head of the derived nominal, the nominal morpheme supplies the nominal specification of the entire structure. In addition to this, it specifies the class of the derived word and so the appropriate number/class features are spelt out.

### 1.3.2. Verb-based negative nominals

Verb-based negative nominals are comprised of a nominal prefix, the negative particle  $\text{t}\ddot{\text{i}}$  and a verb root. This category of verb-to-noun derivation is fairly productive as all verbs that take an agent human subject NP can potentially be used to derive nouns in this class. In (13), I list some examples of verb-based negative nominals that are commonly used in the language.

- |         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
| (13) a. | $\text{\textcircled{0}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-}\gamma\grave{\text{a}}\grave{\text{a}}$<br>Pref-Neg-talk<br>‘One who does not speak much.’                                | $\text{b}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-}\gamma\grave{\text{a}}\grave{\text{a}}$ From $\gamma\grave{\text{a}}\grave{\text{a}}$ ‘talk!’<br>Pref-Neg-talk<br>‘People who do not speak much.’  |
| b.      | $\text{\textcircled{0}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-b}\text{w}\hat{\text{i}}$<br>Pref-Neg-sleep<br>‘One who seldom sleeps.’  | $\text{b}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-b}\text{w}\hat{\text{i}}$ From $\text{b}\text{w}\hat{\text{i}}$ ‘sleep!’<br>Pref-Neg-sleep<br>‘People who seldom sleep.’  |
| c.      | $\text{\textcircled{0}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-w}\text{j}\grave{\text{e}}\text{t}\grave{\text{i}}$<br>Pref-Neg-laugh<br>‘One who seldom laughs (serious person).’         | $\text{b}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-w}\text{j}\grave{\text{e}}\text{t}\grave{\text{i}}$ From $\text{w}\text{j}\grave{\text{e}}\text{t}\grave{\text{e}}$ ‘laugh!’<br>Pref-Neg-laugh<br>‘Serious persons.’  |
| d.      | $\text{\textcircled{0}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-}\text{f}\grave{\text{i}}\text{'}\grave{\text{i}}\text{-n}\hat{\text{u}}$<br>Pref-Neg-wash body<br>‘One who seldom baths.’ | $\text{b}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-}\text{f}\grave{\text{i}}\text{'}\grave{\text{i}}\text{-n}\hat{\text{u}}$ From $\text{f}\grave{\text{i}}\text{'}\grave{\text{i}}$ $\text{n}\hat{\text{u}}$ ‘Bathe!’<br>Pref-Neg-wash body<br>‘People who seldom bathe.’ |
| e.      | $\text{\textcircled{0}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-j}\acute{\text{u}}\text{'}\acute{\text{u}}\text{-n}\grave{\text{u}}$<br>Pref-Neg-hear things<br>‘Disobedient person.’      | $\text{b}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-t}\ddot{\text{i}}\text{-j}\acute{\text{u}}\text{'}\acute{\text{u}}\text{-n}\grave{\text{u}}$ From $\text{j}\acute{\text{u}}\text{'}\acute{\text{u}}$ $\text{n}\grave{\text{u}}$ ‘hear/obey’<br>Pref-Neg-hear things<br>‘Disobedient persons.’   |

## 2. Compounding

Noun formation via compounding in Bafut generally involves the combination of two parts of speech. These combinations could be either: (i) verb + noun, (ii) adjective + noun, or (iii) noun + noun. Noun + noun combinations to form compounds are particularly rare. Where such combinations are attested, the result is usually the structure of an associative construction (and not a compound per se). Expressions that are considered as compound nouns in this discussion generally meet the following criteria:

- a) If a compound noun is formed from two independent nouns, each with a prefix, only one of the prefixes marks singular or plural in the resulting compound;
- b) Although a compound noun is composed of at least two word stems and may have additional morphemes attached in order to make it a grammatically classifiable lexical entity, it has the status of a single word;
- c) The grammatical category of the components is not necessarily related to the grammatical category of the compound. The resulting compound noun is not subject to the rules which bind its components;
- d) The meaning of the compound noun is almost always different from the sum of the meanings of its component parts.

Based on these criteria, the few instances of compound nouns formed via Noun + Noun combinations include:

m̀-̀b̀índz̀èr̀ì	“sheep”	from	m̀-̀b̀ì	“goat”	and	ǹ-̀dz̀èr̀ì	“no meaning”
m̀-̀b̀índ̀òŋ	“goat”	from	m̀-̀b̀ì	“goat”	and	ǹ-̀d̀òŋ	“horns”
m̀únt̀ó’ò	“prince(ss)”	from	m̀ú	“child”	and	ǹ-̀t̀ó’ò	“palace”

In plural formation, only the prefix of the first member of the compound is affected (m̀únt̀ó’ò/b̀óóŋǹ-̀t̀ó’ò “prince/princes”). Compare this with a very closely related noun which is not a compound *m̀àŋgỳé ǹ-̀t̀ó’ò* “queen” whose plural is *b̀àŋgỳé b̀í ǹ-̀t̀ó’ò* “queens”.

## 2.1. Verb + noun combinations

Compound nouns can be formed by combining a verb and a noun. For ease of exposition, we will refer to such compounds as *verbal compound nouns*. Following are some examples of this category of compound nouns.

### Verbal compounds

(14) a.	k̀úúk̀òr̀ì	"jigger"	from	k̀úú	"enter!"	à-k̀òr̀ì	"foot"
b.	ǹàŋòb̀ír̀ì	"spring (water)"	from	ǹàŋò	"pour down/jump!"	ǹì-̀b̀ír̀ì	"pit"
c.	b̀á’ám̀íỳàà	"millipede"	from	b̀á’â	"plait!"	m̀ì-ỳàà	"rainy season"
d.	b̀ú’út̀ót̀í	"wood-pecker"	from	b̀ú’út̀ò	"hit/knock a little!"	à-t̀ì	"tree/stick"

In the formation of the examples in (14a) and (14d) the vowel deletion process targeting the second of two contiguous vowels applies. The compound nouns formed by this process behave like ordinary class 1 nouns in terms of concord marking. In plural formation, the compound noun takes the plural prefix of ordinary class 2 nouns. In the examples in (15) the first column illustrates verbal compounds while the second column illustrates ordinary gender 1/2 nouns.

(15) a.	ǹàŋòb̀ír̀ì	ỳ-à	d.	m̀-̀f̀ò	ỳ-à
	spring	my		chief	my
	"My (water) spring"			"My chief"	
b.	b̀ì-ǹàŋòb̀ír̀ì	‘(water) springs’	e.	b̀ì-f̀ò	‘chiefs’
c.	b̀ì-k̀úúk̀òr̀ì	‘jiggers’	f.	b̀ì-l̀óò	‘husbands’

## 2.2. Adjective + noun combinations

Compound nouns in Bafut can also be formed by combining an adjective and an ordinary noun. In such combinations, the adjective always precedes the noun although in an ordinary noun phrase the adjective generally follows the noun. The entire compound takes either the class 7 or class 9 noun prefix. The noun, which is the second element in the compound maintains its original prefix which remains constant (if it is not a vowel, in which case it may delete or coalesce with a preceding vowel) whether the compound is used in the singular or plural form. Only the initial prefix which precedes the adjective changes in the plural form. In the illustrations below, I categorise the compounds based on the noun class prefix that is employed in the derivation.

### (16). Prefix a-

à-fìrìmángjè/ì-fìrìmángjè	“barren woman”	from	fìrê	“barren”	mángyè	“woman”
à-dìrótú/ì-dìrótú	“shame/disgrace”	from	dìrê	“heavy”	à-tû	“head”
à-lwĩntón/ì-lwĩntón	“anger/bitterness”	from	lwĩ	“bitter”	ñ-tòŋ	“neck”

The first member of these compounds can also function as an adjectival noun in the sense that it attributes a quality to the second member of the compound in the same way that ordinary adjectives do. For more on adjectival nouns, see chapter 5.

### (17). Prefix N-

ìm-fîdìgì/ìm-fíidìgì	“darkness”	from	fîi	“black”	ì-dìgì	“places”
ìm-fíitsà’è/ìm-fíitsà’è	“police/soldier”	from	fîi	“black”	ì-tsà’è	“clothes”
ìm-fù’úbèè/ìm-fù’úbèè	“dawn”	from	fú’û	“white”	à-bèè	“outside”

These examples manifest the V2 deletion process discussed earlier.

## 3. Other noun formation processes

Bafut employs a number of other methods different from the standard processes discussed in the preceding sections to form nouns. Some of these processes are discussed below.

### 3.1. Idiophonic nouns

A small number of nouns in Bafut is derived from idiophones which generally reflect the sound made by the object to which the idiophone refers. These nouns take the class 1a zero prefix and behave exactly like ordinary class 1a nouns. Some examples are:

- (18) a. ø-tsùtsù/bì-tsùtsù “water fall”  
 b. ø-ŋíŋí/bì-ŋíŋí “tiny flies”  
 c. ø-twààtwàà/bì-twààtwàà “HIV AIDS (from the sound of a running stomach)”  
 d. ø-tùgìtùgì/bì-tùgìtùgì “motor cycle”

### 3.2. Reduplication

A special set of nouns is formed via reduplication of a verb which denotes direction of movement. The nouns thus formed designate migrants who have moved in from specific (usually disadvantageous) regions/areas. These nouns form their plural in class 2. For a more detailed discussion of reduplication as a word formation process in Bafut, see chapter 12.

(19) a.	ø-sísíǵí/bì-sísíǵí	“descendant from higher geographical region”	from	síǵê	“descend”
b.	ø-kókók’ó/bì-kókók’ó	“one who moved up from a lower (geographical) region”	from	kók’ô	“climb”
c.	ø-tswítswí/bì-tswítswí	“autochthon (Original settler)”	from	tswî	“sit/stay”
d.	ø-kwékweé/bì-kwékweé	“one who moved into the city from a remote area”	from	kwéê	“return from farm/bush”
e.	ø-kúkúú/bì-kúkúú	“one who moved into city from unspecified area / foreigner”	from	kúù	“enter”

The reduplication process here can be described as partial since the original member of the reduplicant has lost either the vowel length (d-e) or one syllable (a – b) characteristic of the original verb.

### 3.3. Generic compounds

A generic term - *ǵgàǵ* - which translates roughly as “person/expert” can be used to construct compound nouns which generally denote people who have some particular ability, function or characteristic. The resultant compound formed has the meaning of something like “Person/expert of X where X denotes the special ability, function or characteristic. Some examples are presented below. The meaning of the second member of the compound is indicated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column.

(20) a.	ǵ-gàǵmândzì	“road constructor”	mândzì	‘road’
b.	ǵ-gàǵwàsè	“nurse/doctor”	à-wàsè	‘hospital’
c.	ǵ-gàǵwà’ànì	“scholar/student/pupil”	à-ǵwà’ànì	‘book’
d.	ǵ-gàǵkwì’ífð	“member of an administrative unit”	kwì’ífð	‘administrative unit’
e.	ǵ-gàǵnìj’ô	“participant at a wedding”	nì-j’ô	‘marriage’
f.	ǵ-gàǵtǵê	“member of a clan”	à-tǵê	‘clan’
g.	ǵ-gàǵnìyðð	“patient”	nì-yðð	‘illness’

The plural forms of the words in this group are marked by a floating high tone (the reflex of a tonal linker) which associates to the stem of the first member of the compound and then spreads one syllable rightwards. The low tone on the homorganic nasal as well as the following nasal consonant has a lowering effect on the floating plural marker such that it is realised as mid or stepped.

(21) a.	ǵ-gǵmândzì	“road constructors”
---------	------------	---------------------

- b. ñ-gǎñwàsè “nurses/doctors”
- c. ñ-gǎñwà’ànì “scholars/students/pupils”
- d. ñ-gǎñkwí’ífò “members of a secret society”
- e. ñ-gǎñńí’ó’ò “participants at a wedding”
- f. ñ-gǎñtʃè “members of a clan”
- g. ñ-gáñńí’yòò “patients”

### 3.3. Sex gender

Sex gender is not a grammatical feature of Bafut. That is to say, the fact that any particular noun may indicate a masculine, feminine, common or neuter idea is not in any way reflected in the morphology of the noun. Nevertheless, the idea of sex-gender in the nouns in Bafut may be conveyed in several ways. The most common way is to use a descriptive possessive expression indicating masculine or feminine immediately preceding the generic or common word. This method is often employed to derive animal names where the descriptive possessive translates roughly as “wife of .../husband of ...”. Some examples of nouns in this group are:

(22)	Generic word	Masculine form	Feminine form
a.	kwíñàm “pig”	ñ-dòókwíñàm	ñ-gwékíwíñàm
b.	nàà “animal/pig”	ñ-dòónàà	ñ-gwénàà
c.	ń-bû “dog”	ñ-dòòmbû	ñ-gwêmbû
d.	ń-sǎè “elephant”	ñ-dòònsǎè	ñ-gwěnsǎè
e.	bú’ú “baboon”	ñ-dòóbú’ú	ñ-gwěbú’ú
f.	káù “cow”	ñ-dòókáù	ñ-gwěkáù

In the formation of personal nouns (nouns designating professions) a similar descriptive expression meaning “woman” is used after the generic form to designate a female person of that profession. Where the generic term is not followed by any descriptive expression, it is generally assumed to refer to a male member of that profession. It is worth noting that these are professions from which women were generally excluded, so, the feminine forms are recent developments created at the advent of emancipation.

(23)	Generic Word	Masculine form	Feminine form
a.	bílí bá “blacksmith”	bílí bá	bílí bá mǎngjè
b.	ń-lèñ “palm wine taper”	ń-lèñ	ń-lèñ mǎngjè
c.	dòlóbà “driver”	dòlóbà	dòlóbà mǎngjè
d.	tsítsà “teacher”	tsítsà	tsítsà mǎngjè
e.	kúgì “chef”	kúgì	kúgì mǎngjè

There is only one instance where a special term is used to designate masculine and feminine where a generic or common term already exists.

(24)	Generic term	Masculine form	Feminine form
	ñ-gwû “fowl”	à-ñ-kègè	ñ-kó’óngwû

The generic term belongs in class 9 and although the masculine form begins with the vowel *à* it i.e. *à-ŋ-kə̀gə̀* ‘rooster’, does not belong in class 7. This noun is one of the irregular nouns which belong in class 1a by virtue of concord marking and plural formation although they begin with the vowel *à*. As we recall, this vowel was treated as an augment forming part of the root while the following nasal remains the class prefix since it determines concord. The feminine form *ŋ-kó’óŋgwû* ‘hen’ belongs in class 3a.

### Conclusion

Of the different processes employed in derivation and compounding in Bafut as presented in this chapter, derivation stands out as the most productive. The derivational affixes attested can be used with a wide range of lexical categories to form new nouns in the language. In fact, derivation as a process of noun formation is widely used (albeit unconsciously) in creating new terminology to designate artefacts and concepts that have been borrowed from foreign cultures. Compounding as a word formation process, on the other hand, is very unproductive. As has been observed in other Grassfields Bantu languages, the list of items that can be viewed as compound nouns is exhaustive. In fact, no Grassfields Bantu language that I know of can boast of up to twenty compound nouns. What often appears to be compounds in these languages is actually an associative construction that employs a floating tone as associative marker.



## Chapter 4 The pronoun system

### Introduction

Bafut has eight main classes of pronouns: absolute pronouns, logophoric pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, possessive pronouns, interrogative pronouns, relative pronouns, qualificative pronouns and reflexive pronouns. The expression “pronoun” as used in this chapter refers to those forms that are in themselves complete words and which can stand instead of a noun, or which may be used in apposition to a noun, either before it or after it. However, since in most cases, these same elements can co-occur with a noun within the noun phrase as determiners, the discussion will also include their roles as modifiers. These different classes of pronouns are presented in the sections that follow.

### 1. Absolute pronouns

The absolute pronoun is one whose main function is to stand for a noun in a clause. It does not describe or limit a noun in any way. There are two sets of these pronouns and they occur as subjects or objects in sentences. Each set is further divided into human and non-human pronouns which can in turn be either simple or compound.

#### 1.1. Simple human subject pronouns

These are pronouns which substitute for human nouns in subject position. They are designated as simple because their forms (internal constituency) are not complex and they substitute for single human nouns or for a group made up of single distinctive members. They contrast, in this respect, with the compound human pronouns (cf. section 1.3) which substitute for groups of human nouns functioning as subject of a clause. Following is a table of simple human subject pronouns in Bafut.

Table I: Simple human subject pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1	mè	bì'ì
2	ò	nì/bù
3	à	bó

With the exception of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural form, all the human subject pronouns bear an underlying low tone. When used in sentences however, this low tone may be replaced by either a tense or aspectual high tone. In the following examples which illustrate the use of the simple human pronouns, *mè* in (1a) bears a surface high tone which in this context marks the progressive aspect. This high aspectual marker spreads rightward onto the verb and the first syllable of the object noun.

- (1) a. *mé nó mǐlù'ù*  
 mè'      nó      mǐ-lù'ù  
 I+Asp    drink    6-Palm wine  
 “I am drinking palm wine”.

- b. *bó nó mǐlù'ù*  
 bó'      nó      mǐ-lù'ù  
 they+Asp    drink    6-Palm wine  
 “They are drinking palm wine”.

## 1.2 Simple non-human subject pronouns

The simple non-human subject pronouns stand for simple non-human nouns functioning as the subject in a clause. The form of these pronouns depends on the morphological class to which the nouns they substitute belong. The table below contains the simple non-human subject pronouns listed according to noun class. Following the table is an illustration of the use of these pronouns in sentences.

Table II: Simple non-human subject pronouns

Noun class	Pronoun
1	à
2	bí
3	í
5	ní
6	mí
7	á
8	dʒí
9	jì
10	dʒí
19	fí

- (2) a. *à kî wòô á ñ-ŷê.*  
à kî wòô á ñ-ŷê  
it P2 fall on 9-ground  
‘‘It fell on the ground.’’
- b. *bí kî wò-kê á ñ-ŷê.*  
bí kî wò-kê á ñ-ŷê  
they P2 fall+Ext. on 9-ground  
‘‘They fell (severally) on the ground.’’
- c. *fí kî wòô á ñ-ŷê.*  
fí kî wòô á ñ-ŷê  
it P2 fall on ground  
‘‘It fell on the ground.’’
- d. *mí kî wò-kê á ñ-ŷê.*  
mí kî wò-kê á ñ-ŷê  
they P2 fall+Ext. on 9-ground  
‘‘They fell (severally) on the ground.’’

In the examples in (b) and (d), the verb ‘‘fall’’ is inflected to indicate that the event/action of falling affected several subjects at the same time. More will be said about such inflections in chapter 6. In (a) and (c), I have doubled the vowel *o* in the verb in order to accommodate an extra boundary low tone in the citation form and the low tone of the following desyllabified nasal on ‘‘ground’’. In all the examples, the preposition deletes because of the preceding vowel. Recall that Bafut does not allow a sequence of two vowels across morpheme boundary. Although the subject in these examples is plural, it still remains simple as we are

not referring to a set of groups functioning together. This distinction will become clearer in the next section where we treat compound absolute pronouns.

### 1.3. Compound subject pronouns

Bafut has only human compound subject pronouns. In other words, non-human compound subject pronouns do not exist. The category of human subject pronouns discussed here is designated as *compound* first because the pronouns substitute distinct groups of persons or separate individuals functioning together as a set and second because in their internal constituency, each is a combination of two sets of simple pronouns. The expression *compound* here is however not synonymous to *plural* in the strict sense of the word. I attempt to explain what this means: whereas a plural pronoun such as *bí* “they” may refer to a single group of say birds (thus synonymous with plural), a compound pronoun such as *bùbó* translates as “you (sg) and them” and refers to a set of two groups one comprising “you(sg) and the other comprising “them (3<sup>rd</sup> persons)”.

Table III: Compound Human Subject Pronouns

Persons	Singular	Plural
1 + 2	sì/bì'ó	bì'ínè
1 + 3	bì'íjú	bì'íbó
2 + 3	bǔjú	bùbó

Although these compound pronouns can be considered plural in the sense that each implies more than one person, there is still some kind of number distinction. The singular forms are dual pronouns in the sense that the cardinality of the pronominal reference is exactly two while with the plural forms, the cardinality of the reference is more than two. The reference of each of these pronouns is presented below:

Sing	sì/bì'ó	Speaker and Listener (I and you (sing))
	bì'íjú	Speaker and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (I and him/her)
	bǔjú	Listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (you (sing) and him/her)
Plural	bì'ínè	Speaker, listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (I, you and him/her, all of us or we (including listener) and them)
	bì'íbó	A set of two groups: the first group comprising speaker and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party and the second group comprising other people mentioned in the discourse. (I and them or we and them)
	bùbó	Set of two groups: first group comprises listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party and the second comprises people mentioned in the discourse. (you (sign/plu) and them)

Apart from the form *sì* which is a primitive, each of the compound pronouns consists of two simple pronominal forms that are clearly segmentable. In morphological terms, the pronouns are derived by combining two simple pronominal forms as shown below:

Singular	bì'ó	1st person plural simple subject pron. + 2nd person singular simple subject p
	bì'íjú	1st person plural simple subject pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique P
	bǔjú	2nd person plural simple subject pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique
Plural	bì'ínè	1st person plural simple subject pron. + 2nd person plural simple subject pro
	bì'íbó	1st person plural simple subject pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pro
	bùbó	2nd person plural simple subject pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pr

It is important to note that the first member of each compound is morphologically [+plural] even though the referent is singular. Thus, taking the second dual form *bì'íjú*, we observe

that it is made up of *bì'í* “we” and *jú* “him/her”. However, the reading we get is not “we and him/her” but “I and him/her”. This raises questions as to why and how a plural pronoun like *bì'í* “we” which independently is [+plural] gets interpreted as “I” [+singular]. My guess is that this [+singular feature] is inherited from the second member of the compound *jú* “him/her” which is singular. This presupposes that in these compounds, the second element is the head whose features determine the basic characteristics of the entire compound. This proposal is however open to a more rigorous investigation.

The use of some of these pronouns is illustrated in the sentences below.

- (3) a. *sì ká yèé ndânwì.*  
           sì           ká     yèê    á    n-dânwì  
           we (1 + 2) F0    go       to 9-church  
           “We (you and I) will go to church.”
- b. *bì'í bó ká yèé ndânwì.*  
           bì'í bó    ká     yèê    á    n-dânwì  
           we (1 + 3) F0    go       to 9-church  
           “We (I/we and them) will go to church.”
- c. *bùjú ká yèè ndânwì.*  
           bùjú       ká     yèê    á    n-dânwì  
           you (2 + 3) F0    go       to 9-church  
           “You (you and him) will go to church.”

#### 1.4. Object pronouns

Only human pronouns in Bafut are used in object position. Non-human pronouns are never used in this position. There are two groups of the human object pronouns determined by their distribution. While some are restricted to occurring after verbs (object of verb), others are restricted to occurring after prepositions (object of prepositions). These again subdivide into simple and compound pronouns as in the case of the subject pronouns discussed immediately above.

##### 1.4.1. Object of verb pronouns

Tables IV and V below contain simple and compound pronouns that are used as objects of verbs.

Table IV: Simple verb object pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1	yà	jì'í
2	yò	yùù
3	jì	wàà

Table V: Compound verb object pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1+2	jí'ò	jì'ínè
1+3	jì'íjú	jì'íbó
2+3	yùújú	yùúbó
3+3	wàájú	wàábó

Like the compound subject pronouns, the object pronouns are designated as *compound* first because the pronouns substitute distinct groups of persons or separate individuals functioning together as a set and second because in their internal constituency, each is a combination of two sets of simple pronouns. The singular forms are dual pronouns in the sense that the cardinality of the pronominal reference is exactly two while with the plural forms, the cardinality of the reference is more than two. The reference of each of these pronouns is presented below:

Singular	jì'ò	Speaker and Listener (me and you (sing))
	jì'íjú	Speaker and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (me and him/her)
	ɣùújú	Listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (you (sing) and him/her)
	wàájú	Him/her and a singular third party
Plural	jì'ínè	Speaker, listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (me, you and him/her, all of us or us (including listener) and them)
	jì'íbó	A set of two groups: the first group comprising speaker and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party and the second group comprising other set of people mentioned in the discourse. (me and them or us and them)
	ɣùúbó	Set of two groups: first group comprises listener and a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party, second group comprises people mentioned in the discourse. (you (sing/plu) and them)
	wàábó	Them and a plural third party

Each of these compound object pronouns is bimorphemic consisting of two simple pronominal forms that are clearly segmentable. Simply put, the pronouns are derived by combining two simple pronominal forms as shown below:

Singular	jì'ò	1st person plural simple object pron. + 2nd person singular simple subject p
	jì'íjú	1st person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique P
	ɣùújú	2nd person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique
	wàájú	3rd person plural simple object pron + 3rd person singular simple oblique p
Plural	jì'ínè	1st person plural simple object pron. + 2nd person plural simple subject pro
	jì'íbó	1st person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pro
	ɣùúbó	2nd person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pr
	wàábó	3rd person plural simple object pron + 3rd person plural simple oblique pron

Note that in terms of the singular plural morphology of the members of the compound, the object compound pronouns behave in much the same way as the subject compound pronouns. Thus, the first member of the compound is consistently plural while the second is either singular or plural. Where the second member is singular, the entire compound has a singular referent and when it is plural, the referent is plural.

The use of these pronouns is illustrated in the following sentences. The sentences in (4) illustrate the use of simple pronouns while those in (5) illustrate the use of compound pronouns.

(4) a. àmbê kî fêé yâ.

àmbé à kî fêé yà  
 Ambe SM P2 slap me  
 “Ambe slapped me.”

- b. *àmbe kî fêé jí'í*  
 àmbé à kî fêé jì'í  
 Ambe SM P2 slap us  
 “Ambe slapped us (i.e. speaker and a third party).”

- (5) a. *àmbe kî wà'átó jí'ò*  
 àmbé à kî wá'átó jì'ó  
 Ambe SM P2 remember us  
 “Ambe remembered us (i.e. speaker and listener).”

- b. *àmbe kî wà'átó jí'íbó*  
 àmbé à kî wá'átó jì'íbó  
 Ambe SM P2 remember us  
 “Ambe remembered us (i.e. speaker and a 3<sup>rd</sup> group).”

#### 1.4.2. Object of preposition pronouns

Just like the verb object pronouns, the preposition object pronouns subdivide into simple and compound pronouns. Tables VI and VII contain the simple and compound object of preposition pronouns.

Table 5.VI: Simple object preposition pronouns

person	singular	plural
1	mò	bì'ì
2	γò	bù
3	jú	bó

Table 5.VII: Compound object preposition pronouns

person	singular	plural
1+2	bì'ò	bì'ínè
1+3	bì'íjú	bì'íbó
2+3	bǔjú	bǔbó

The compound pronouns which are complements of prepositions are formally very similar to the compound pronouns which function as subjects. The only feature that distinguishes them is that whereas the first person singular form has two alternatives for the subject pronouns (sì ~ bì'ò), it has only one form (bì'ì) for the object (of preposition) forms.

The following examples illustrate the use of the compound object of preposition pronouns.

- (6) a. *àmbe kî fá mìlù'ù mbó mò.*  
 àmbé à kî fá mì-lù'ù á ìn-bó mò  
 Ambe SM P2 give 6-Palmwine to 6-hands me  
 “Ambe gave palmwine to me.”

- b. *àmbe kî fá mìlù'ù mbó bó.*  
 àmbé à kî fá mì-lù'ù á ìn-bó bó  
 Ambe SM P2 give 6-Palmwine to 6-hands them  
 “Ambe gave palmwine to them.”

- (7) a. *àmbé kî lə́s mìlù'ù mbó bì'ô.*  
 àmbé à kî lə́s mì-lù'ù á ìn-bó bì'ô  
 Ambe SM P2 keep 6-Palmwine to 6-hands us  
 “Ambe reserved palm wine for us (i.e. speaker and listener).”
- b. *àmbé kî lə́s mìlù'ù mbó búbó.*  
 àmbé à kî lə́s mì-lù'ù á ìn-bó búbó  
 Ambe SM P2 keep 6-Palmwine to 6-hands you  
 “Ambe reserved palm wine for you (i.e. groups of listeners and 3<sup>rd</sup> party).”

## 2. Logophoric pronouns

Logophoric pronouns in Bafut are very common in reported speech where the use of subordinate structures is frequent. The expression “logophoric pronoun” is used here to refer to devices (i.e. proforms) which indicate that in conjoined clauses, the subject of the following clause is identical with or different from the subject of the preceding clause. Following Wiesemann (1982a,b) we use *coreference* in the situation where the subjects are identical and *switch reference* in situations where the subjects are not the same.

### 2.1. Coreference

A logophoric pronoun marking coreference is used mostly in temporary subordinative sentences. In such cases, a pronoun *jú* or *bó* is used when a third person is coreferential with the third person doing the reporting. The following examples illustrate the use of coreference.

- (8) a. *kwímáŋkò'ò lé nfwóŋ mɔ́ jú ká lígî nsóó wá.*  
 kwímáŋkò'ò à lé N-fwóŋ mɔ́ jú ká lígî ñ-sòò w-á  
 Tortoise<sub>i</sub> SM P3 N-say that he<sub>i</sub> F0 till 3-farm 3-the  
 “Tortoise said that he will cultivate the land.”
- b. *bìsín bjà tígì ñká'á mɔ́ bó ká ʒwítɔ́ kwímáŋkò'ò.*  
 bìsín bjà bí tígì N-kà'á mɔ́ bó ká ʒwítɔ́ kwímáŋkò'ò  
 Birds<sub>i</sub> the SM then N-plan that they<sub>i</sub> F0 kill tortoise  
 “The birds then planned to kill tortoise.”

In these examples, the pronouns *jú* and *bó* in the subordinate clauses refer back to the subjects of the main clauses “Tortoise” and “the birds” respectively. In each example therefore, the subjects of the main verb and the subordinate clause are coreferential.

The logophoric pronoun marking coreference is deleted in consecutive clauses. Subsequent verbs, that is verbs following the main verb in the consecutive clause rather bear a homorganic nasal consonant. In the following examples, the homorganic nasal is in bold face and is separated from the root by a hyphen in the underlying representation.

- (9) a. *kwímáŋkò'ò tígì mmá'á mâtáá wá nlèèntì.*  
 kwímáŋkò'ò á tígì N-mà'á mâtáá w-â N-lèèntì  
 tortoise SM then N-set 1-trap 1-the N-hide  
 “Tortoise then set the trap and (then) hid himself.”
- b. *ñù bàjúúdà jɔ́ jéésò ñkwétɔ́ jí.*  
 ñù bàjúúdà á jɔ́ jéésò N-kwétɔ́ jì  
 person Jew SM see Jesus N-help him

“A Jew saw Jesus and helped him.”

In the first example in (9a), the homorganic nasal consonant on the main verb (*N-mà'á* ‘set’) has been occasioned by the preceding deficient verb *tígì*. The second homorganic nasal on the verb *N-làntâ* ‘hide’ is a consequence of having verbs in a series. See chapters 7 and 12 for more on such forms of homorganic nasal marking in the language.

## 2.2 Switch reference

Switch reference marking is indicated by the presence of a subject pronoun in the subordinate or second clause of the temporary subordinative and consecutive clauses. The examples in (8a and 9b) can be rewritten as in (10a-b) to illustrate switch reference of two subjects.

- (10) a. *kwímáŋkò'ò lé nfwóné mó à ká lígí nsóó wâ.*  
 kwímáŋkò'ò à lé N-fwóné mó à ká lígí ñ-sòò w-á  
 Tortoise<sub>i</sub> SM P3 N-say that he<sub>k</sub> F0 till 1-farm 1-the  
 “Tortoise said that he (someone else) will farm the land.”
- b. *ŋù bàjúúdà jé jéésò, á kwétò jí.*  
 ŋù bàjúúdà á jé jéésò á kwétò jì  
 person Jew SM see Jesus<sub>i</sub> he<sub>i</sub> help him  
 “A Jew saw Jesus and he (i.e. Jesus) helped him (i.e. the Jew).”

In (10a), the person to farm the land is not Tortoise but a third party referred to earlier on in the discourse. In this case the logophoric pronoun *à* (with a low tone) is used. It is possible in this sentence to use the coreferential *jú* to indicate that Tortoise will farm the land himself. In (10b), on the other hand, Jesus Christ (the object of the sentence) helped the Jew. The logophoric pronoun *á* (with a high tone) is used in this case where the third party referred to is mentioned in the same sentence. Contrast this with (10a) where *à* (with a low tone) is used when the third party is not mentioned in the same sentence but earlier on in the discourse. The use of the coreferential *jú* is not possible in (10b).

## 3. The demonstrative pronoun

In specific discourse contexts in Bafut, especially in situations where the substantive is recoverable from the context, the demonstrative alone can be used (as a pronoun) in the place of the substantive. There are three types of demonstrative pronouns whose forms are determined by two factors: (a) degree of proximity/relative distance between speaker, listener and object referred to, (b) the morphological class to which the relevant noun belongs. These pronouns also have emphatic forms which go up to three degrees of emphasis. We use the expressions *neutral* and *emphatic* demonstratives to distinguish between the two forms of demonstrative pronouns.

### 3.1 Neutral demonstrative pronouns

There are three stems of the neutral demonstrative pronoun each determined by the degree of proximity between speaker, listener and referent. The first form signifies “this/these” indicating proximity to speaker. The second form signifies “that/those” indicating proximity to the listener. The third signifies “that/those yonder” indicating relative distance from both speaker and listener but indicating that the object is within sight and can be pointed at. The stems of these three demonstratives are:



- (11) Near Speaker (NS)    Near Listener (NL)    Far from speaker and listener (FSL)  
           -u                                    -aa                                    -ii

Each stem takes a concord consonant corresponding to the morphological class of the noun that the pronoun substitutes. These concord consonants are presented in the table below:

Table VIII: Demonstrative concord consonants

Noun class	Concord consonant
1	ɣ- ~ w-
2	b- ~ bj-
3	ɣ- ~ w-
5	n- ~ nj-
6	m- ~ mj-
7	j-
8	dz- ~ dʒ- ~ dʒj-
9	y-
10	dz- ~ dʒ- ~ dʒj
19	f- ~ fj-

As we notice, there is variation in the forms of the concord consonants. In fact, only classes 7 and 9 have a unique concord consonant. For a comment on this variation, see paragraph after table IX which presents the full forms of the demonstrative pronouns.

The following sentences illustrate the use of simple demonstrative pronouns which stand for nouns belonging in classes 1, 2, 5 and 6. The figures in the glosses indicate the noun classes.

- (12) a. *ɣû mbèé mè ní jìnsígínè.*

ɣ-û    á    m-bèè    mè    à    ní    jìn-sígínè  
 1-this    on    9-side    me    it    is    1-good  
 “This one near me is a nice one.”

- b. *bû mbèé mè ní bìn-sígínè.*

bû    á    m-bèè    mè    b-í    ní    bìn-sígínè  
 2-these    on    9-side    me    2-they    are    2-good  
 “These ones near me are nice ones.”

- c. *àmbe kǎŋ nû mǎ ní bàŋè láà.*

àmbe    à    kǎŋ    n-û    mǎ    n-í    bàŋè    láà  
 Ambe    SM    like    5-this    that    5-is    red    DEF  
 “Ambe likes this one which is red.”

- d. *àmbe kî nǎŋsí nó já tú mû mǎ mí bàŋè láà.*

àmbe    à    kî    nǎŋsí    nó    j-á    á    à-tû    m-û    mǎ    m-í    bàŋè    láà  
 Ambe    SM    P2    put    9-snake    9-the    on    head    6-these    that    6-are    red    DEF  
 “Ambe placed the snake on these ones that are red.”

In rapid/colloquial speech, the anaphoric definitiviser is realized simply as áá. For instance, the last bit of the sentence immediately above will be realized as (... mí bàŋ áà)

### 3.2 Emphatic demonstrative pronouns

The emphatic demonstrative pronouns are derived from the simple demonstrative pronouns via suffixation and reduplication. There are three degrees of emphasis which we can capture in a scale ranging from 1 – 3 in ascending order. The full forms of the emphatic demonstrative pronouns corresponding to all the noun classes are presented in the table below. The forms corresponding to the degree 0 are the simple demonstratives from which the emphatic counterparts are derived. The first degree emphatic form for NL and FSL differs from the simple demonstrative form only in a rise in intonation when realizing the emphatic form. In the transcription, the symbol / indicates the rise in intonation.

Table 5.IX: Emphatic demonstrative pronouns

Noun class	Sample noun	Near speaker (NS)	Near listener (NL)	Far from speaker and listener (NSL)	Degree of emphasis
1	m̩f̩ɔ̩ “chief”	ɣû	wáà	wî	0
		ɣwâ	/wâà	/wî	1
		ɣúlâ	wálâ	wílì	2
		ɣwâɣú ɣúlâɣú	wááwâ wáláwâ	wîwî wílíwî	3
2	b̩f̩ɔ̩ “chiefs”	bû	bjáà	bî	0
		búà	/bjáà	/bî	1
		búlâ	bjálâ	bílì	2
		búábú búlâbû	bjáàbjâ bjálâbjâ	bîbî bílìbî	3
3	ŋ̩g̩áɾ̩ “gun”	ɣù	wáà	wî	0
		ɣùâ	/wâà	/wî	1
		ɣùlâ	wálâ	wílì	2
		ɣùáɣú ɣùlâɣú	wááwâ wáláwâ	wîwî wílíwî	3
5	n̩b̩ɔ̩’ɔ̩ “pumpkin”	nû	njáà	nî	0
		núà	/njáà	/nî	1
		núlâ	njálâ	nílì	2
		núànû núlânû	njáánjâ njálánjâ	nínî nílínî	3
6	m̩b̩ɔ̩’ɔ̩ “pumpkins”	mû	mjáà	mî	0
		múà	/mjáà	/mî	1
		múlâ	mjálâ	mílì	2
		múàmû múlâmû	mjáámjâ mjálámjâ	mímî mílímî	3
7	àkaâŋ “pan/bowl”	jù	jáà	jî	0
		jùû	/jáà	/jî	1
		jùlû	jálâ	jílì	2
		jùájú jùlájú	jáájâ jálájâ	jíjî jílíjî	3
8	àkâŋ “pans/bowls”	dzù	dʒjáà	dʒî	0
		dʒùâ	/dʒjáà	/dʒî	1
		dʒùlâ	dʒjálâ	dʒílì	2
		dʒùádʒú dʒùládʒú	dʒjáádʒjâ dʒjáládʒjâ	dʒìdʒî dʒílídʒî	3

9	m̀b̀u “dog”	j̀u	jàa	jì	0
		j̀ùa	jàa	jì	1
		j̀ùl̀a	jàl̀a	jìl̀i	2
		j̀ùa`j̀u j̀ùl̀a`j̀u	jàa`ja jàl̀a`ja	jìj̀i jìl̀i`ji	3
10	m̀b̀u “dogs”	dz̀u	dzàa	dzì	0
		dz̀ùa	dzàa	dzì	1
		dz̀ùl̀a	dzàl̀a	dzìl̀i	2
		dz̀ùa`dz̀u dz̀ùl̀a`dz̀u	dzàa`dza dzàl̀a`dza	dzìi`dzi dzìl̀i`dzi	3
19	f̀i`ndz̀oŋ “star”	f̀u	fjàa	fì	0
		f̀ùa	fjàa	fì	1
		f̀ùl̀a	fjàl̀a	fìl̀i	2
		f̀ùa`f̀u f̀ùl̀a`f̀u	fjàa`fja fjàl̀a`fja	fìi`fi fìl̀i`fi	3

The two forms of the third degree emphasis are simply stylistic variants. The variations in the forms of the concord consonants seem to be morphologically, rather than phonetically, determined. While phonetic factors can be explored, for instance, to account for the alternation between dz and j (j occurs before the vowel i while dz occurs elsewhere), there is very little else that can be said by way of accounting for the alternation between the other concord consonants in phonetic terms. As such, I will contend myself here and elsewhere in this book with a simple description of the facts. In noun classes 1 and 3, ɣ- varies with w-. While w- occurs before -aa, ɣ- occurs before -u. In classes 8 and 10, dz- varies with dʒ- and dʒj-. The form dz- occurs before -u, dʒ- before -ii and dʒj- before -aa. In the other classes (2, 5, 6, 9, and 19), the general concord consonant for each class varies with a palatalized form; the palatalized form occurring before -aa and the non-palatalized form before the rest of the demonstrative stems (-u and -ii).

In actual usage, the degree of emphasis corresponds to the number of times that the speaker is forced to use the demonstrative pronoun. Generally, the 0 degree emphasis, (i.e the simple demonstrative pronoun) corresponds to the simple, neutral, first time of use. The 1 degree emphasis corresponds to a situation where the speaker has to repeat the demonstrative for the first time. If he/she has to repeat it a second time, this will correspond to the 2 degree emphasis and eventually the 3 degree emphasis if there is still a need for repetition. Thus, picture this scenario where a speaker wants a listener to take a particular ǹiŋg̀d̀d̀ “plantain” (class 5 noun) from a group of many plantains located far from speaker and listener.

(13)

Description of Listener’s action

Neutral first time

Listener picks wrong plantain

Listener again picks wrong one.

Speaker irritated. Voice louder

Listener still fails to pick right one.

Speaker more irritated and voice gets even louder.

Speaker’s vocal reaction

l̀òg̀o níi “take that one yonder”

ŋg̀aŋ, níi “no, that one yonder”

ŋg̀aŋ, níli “no! that one yonder”

ŋg̀aŋ má, nílini “no, I say! that one yonder”

In this context, voice is invariably linked to repetition. The speaker gets irritated (emotional) when caused to repeat or say one thing many times over. The degree of irritation, which corresponds to emphasis, is signaled by loudness and pitch of voice.

The demonstrative forms can be used as a determiner, in which case it follows the noun specified. However, in contexts involving contrastive focus, the demonstrative precedes the noun, in which case the stem vowel of the demonstrative is lengthened and intonation rises.

- (14) a. *lú'ú yû*                      b. *bìlú'ú bû*                      c. *àkâŋ jù*                      d. *fîŋgwâŋ fù*  
           *lú'ú      y-û*                      *bì-lú'ú    b-û*                      *à-kâŋ    j-ù*                      *fî-ŋgwâŋ    f-ù*  
           1-spoon 1-this                      2-spoons 2-these                      7-dish 7-this                      19-salt 19-this  
           “This spoon.”                      “These spoons.”                      “This dish.”                      “This salt.”
- (15) a. *yùù lú'ú*                      b. *bùù bìlú'ú*                      c. *jùù kâŋ*                      d. *fùù fîŋgwâŋ*  
           *y-ùù      lú'ú*                      *b-ùù      bì-lú'ú*                      *j-ùù      à-kâŋ*                      *f-ùù      fî-ŋgwâŋ*  
           this+Foc spoon                      these+Foc 2-spoons                      7-this+Foc 7-dish                      this+Foc 19-salt  
           “This spoon.”                      “These spoons.”                      “This dish.”                      “This salt.”

The examples in (14) illustrate the unmarked neutral way of expressing ‘this N’ in the language while those in (15) can only be interpreted with contrastive focus reference to a particular object to the exclusion of all others in the domain of discourse.

#### 4. Possessive pronouns

The possessive pronoun is made up of a stem and a concord consonant determined by the morphological class of the noun which the pronoun stands for. The stems further subdivide into three groups marking the possessive pronoun for number. The first group is made up of pronouns which substitute for single nouns. The second group is made up of pronouns which substitute for dual nouns; that is the pronoun refers to a group made up of two distinct nouns, e.g. *us* meaning ‘you and I’. In the third group, we find pronouns which substitute for a set of groups of plural nouns, e.g. *you* meaning ‘you (pl) and them’. Table X below presents the different concord consonants and their variants while Table XI presents the stems of the possessive pronouns. Table XII presents the full pronominal forms for class 1 nouns.

Table 5.X: Concord consonants of possessive pronouns

1	y- ~ j- ~ w-
2	b- ~ bj -
3	y- ~ j- ~ w-
5	n- ~ nj-
6	m- ~ mj-
7	j-
8	dz- ~ dʒ-
9	j-
10	dz - ~ dʒ-
19	f- ~ fj-

As in the case of the demonstrative pronouns, the concord consonants of some of the classes have variants. In noun classes 1 and 3, y- varies with j- and w-. y- occurs before –a, –o and –uu, w- occurs before –aa and j- occurs before –i and –u. In noun classes 2, 5, 6 and 19, b-, n-, m- and f- vary with bj-, nj-, mj- and fj- respectively. The palatalized forms bj-, nj-, mj- and fj-

occur before –aa while the non-palatalized forms occur before the rest of the stems –a, -i, -u. In classes 8 and 10, dʒ- varies with dʒj-. The palatalized form dʒj- occurs before –aa while the non-palatalized form occurs before the other stems.

Table XI: Stems of possessive pronouns

Singular	Dual	Plural
-a	-i'o (1+2)	-i'i (1)
-o	-i'iju (1+3)	-i'nə (1+2)
-i	-uuju (2+3)	-i'ibo (1+3)
	-aaju (3+3)	-uu (2)
		-uubo (2+3)
		-aa (3)
		-aabo (3+3)

Table XII: Full pronominal forms for class 1

Single	Dual	Plural
ɣà “mine”	jì'ò	“ours (you and me)”
ɣò “yours”	jì'íjú	“ours (he/she and me)”
jì “his/hers”	ɣùújú	“yours (you and him)”
	wàájú	“theirs (them)”
		ɣùù
		ɣùúbó
		wàà
		wàábó

The possessive pronouns are formally identical (but for a few tone differences) to the human object pronouns discussed earlier in section 1.4 (compare tables IV and V with the immediately preceding tables). In fact, the possessive pronouns seem to be derived from the human object pronouns. In their internal composition, the dual and plural forms are bimorphemic; made up of a simple object pronoun and a simple subject or oblique pronoun as presented below.

Dual	jì'ó	1st person plural simple object pron. + 2nd person singular simple subject pronoun
	jì'íjú	1st person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique Pronoun
	ɣùújú	2nd person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person singular simple oblique
	wàájú	3rd person plural simple object pron + 3rd person singular simple

		oblique p
Plural	jì'ì	1st person plural simple object pronoun.
	jì'ínè	1st person plural simple object pron. + 2nd person plural simple subject pro
	Jì'íbó	1st person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pro
	γùù	2nd person plural simple object pronoun
	γùúbó	2nd person plural simple object pron. + 3rd person plural simple oblique pr
	wàà	3rd person plural simple object pronoun
	wàábó	3rd person plural simple object pron + 3rd person plural simple oblique pron

Like demonstratives, the possessive pronoun can also be used as a determiner. In this usage, the pronoun follows the noun in unmarked, neutral contexts but precedes it in contexts of contrastive focus reference.

- (16) a. *lḡḡ ḡà*      b. *nìbòḡ ní'í*      c. *m̀bú jì'ì*      d. *àlà'á jùúbó*  
*lḡḡ ḡ-à*      *nì-bòḡ n-í'í*      *m̀-bù j-ì'ì*      *à-lá'â j-ùúbó*  
 1-horse 1-my      6-egg 6-our      9-dog 9-our      7-wound 7-your  
 “My horse.”      “Our egg.”      “Our dog.”      “Your wound.”

- (17) a. *γàà lḡḡ*      b. *nì'í nìbòḡ*      c. *jì'í mbù*  
*γ-àà lḡḡ*      *n-ì'í nì-bòḡ*      *j-ì'ì m̀-bù*  
 my+Foc horse      our+Foc 6-egg      our+Foc 9-dog  
 “My own horse.”      “Our own egg.”      “Our own dog.”

An interesting observation about the use of the possessive pronoun as a modifier in the noun phrase is that whenever the notion of location is involved, the object (of preposition) pronoun is used instead of the possessive pronoun. The notion of ‘in (to) our village’ for instance is rendered as *á lá'á bì'ì* instead of \**á lá'á jí'í* (*bì'ì* being the object of preposition as in *à kḡ fá á mbó bì'ì* ‘he gave it to us’).

## 5. Quantitative pronouns

Bafut has two main types of quantitative pronouns; that is, pronouns denoting number or quantity. These pronouns may be used in apposition to the nouns expressed, or they may stand alone. The stems of these pronouns are (i) *-mḡ'ḡ* and (ii) *-tsim*. As usual with Bafut pronouns, the quantitatives take concord markers determined by the morphological class of the noun they refer to or accompany.

### 5.1. The pronoun *-mḡ'ḡ*

The quantitative pronoun *-mḡ'ḡ* signifies “some”, “one of”, or “a certain”. The last meaning i.e. “a certain” is used exclusively in narratives. The concord morphemes of this pronoun are presented in the table below.

Table XIII: Concord morphemes of *-mḡ'ḡ*

Noun class	Concord morpheme	Sample pronoun
1	ji-	jì-mḡ'ḡ

2	bi-	bǐ-mó'ô
3	ji-	jí-mó'ô
5	ni-	ní-mó'ô
6	mi-	mí-mó'ô
7	ji-	jǐ-mó'ô
8	dzi-	dzǐ-mó'ô
9	ji-	jì-mò'ô
10	dzi-	dzǐ-mó'ô
19	fi-	fí-mó'ô

Following are some illustrations of the use of these pronouns for classes 1, 2, 5 and 6. The classes are indicated in the glosses.

(18) a. *àmbe kè jùú jìmò'ô.*

àmbe à kè júú jí-mò'ô  
 Ambe SM P2 buy 1-one of them  
 "Ambe bought one of them."

b. *bímó'ô kè zì fáà.*

bì-mó'ô b-í kè zì fáà  
 2-some 2-SM P2 come here  
 "Some of them came here."

c. *nímó'ô lé ñwò múm àwàṅ*

nì-mó'ô n-í lé N-wòô á múm à-wàṅ  
 5-one 5-SM P3 N-fall Prep inside 7-sand  
 "One of them fell into the sand."

d. *àmbe lě nníṅ mímó'ô múm àwàṅ.*

àmbe à lé N-níṅ mì-mó'ô á múm à-wàṅ  
 Ambe SM P3 N-put 6-some Prep inside 7-sand  
 "Ambe buried some of them in the sand."

## 5.2. The pronoun *-tsìṁ*

The pronoun *-tsìṁ* signifies "both", "all". This pronoun is seldom used in the singular form, but when so used, it expresses the meaning of "the whole of", "the entire". The concord markers of this pronoun are significantly different from those of the sister pronoun *-mò'ô* "one of" or "a certain" presented above. The concord markers of *-tsìṁ* are presented in Table XIV.

Table XIV: Concord markers of *-tsìṁ*

Noun class	Concord marker	Sample pronoun
1	n-	n-tsìṁ
2	bì-	bì-tsìṁ
3	ø-	ø-tsìṁ
5	nì-	nì-tsìṁ
6	mì-	mì-tsìṁ
7	ø-	ø-tsìṁ

8	ø-	ø-tsìm
9	n-	n-tsìm
10	ø-	ø-tsìm
19	fì-	fì-tsìm

The following sentences illustrate the use of this pronoun for classes 1, 3 and 2 nouns respectively.

(19) a. *tsìm kì kùú mfəŋ ŋgò'ò.*

tsìm í kì kùú á m-fəŋ ŋ-gò'ò  
 1-all 1-SM P2 enter Prep 1-bottom 9-stone  
 “all of it entered under a stone.”

b. *tsìm kì nòŋə ntá'á.*

tsìm í kì nòŋə á ñ-tá'á  
 3-all 3-SM P2 lie Prep 3-outside  
 “All of it was exposed.”

c. *àmbê kì tòó bìtsìmó ndâŋwà'ànì.*

àmbé à kì tòó bì-tsìm á ñ-dâŋwà'ànì  
 Ambe SM P2 send 2-all Prep 9-school  
 “Ambe sent all of them to school<sup>1</sup>.”

The quantitative pronoun can also be used modificationally as a determiner. When it occurs in the same construction with a definite article, the quantitative determiner follows the definite article. The quantitative determiner is not used in noun-initial focus position as is the case with the definite article, demonstrative and possessive determiners. Following are some examples of the use of the quantitative determiner.

(20) a. *ŋgùú já ntsìm kì nòŋə ntá'á*

ŋ-gùú j-á n-tsìm ì kì nòŋə á ñ-tá'á  
 9-skin 9-the 9-all 9-it P2 lie Prep 3-outside  
 “The entire skin lay exposed.”

b. *nwì kǎjǐ tóó bíjə̀rə bjá bímó'ó bǎŋŋfê.*

nwì à kǎjǐ tóó bì-jə̀rə Bj-á bì-mó'ó á bǎŋŋfê  
 God SM F3 send 2-thieves 2-the 2-some Prep 1-hell  
 “God shall send some of the thieves to hell.”

## 6. Interrogative pronouns

There are four interrogative pronouns in Bafut used in the formation of content questions, that is, questions requiring the identity of a person, place or object as answer. These pronouns are *fə* ‘where’, *wò* ‘who’ *àkə̀* ‘what’ and *-úú*, ‘which’. The first is a locative interrogative pronoun while the others are used to question the identity of persons and objects. The stem of the pronoun for ‘which’ takes concord markers determined by the morphological class of the relevant noun. Following is a list of the concord consonants.

<sup>1</sup> In the example in (19c), the preposition *á* changes to *ə* and is phonetically realized as part of the preceding word. This is a fairly common process in Bafut and it affects *á* any time it occurs in between two nasal consonants.



Table XV: Concord consonants of interrogative pronoun -úú

Noun Class	Concord consonant	Pronoun
1	w-/ɣ-	wúú/ɣúú
2	b-	búú
3	w-/ɣ-	wúú/ɣúú
5	n-	núú
6	m-	múú
7	j-	júú
8	dʒ-	dʒúú
9	j-	júú
10	dʒ-	dʒúú
19	f-	fúú

As pronouns, the interrogative stands alone or in apposition to a noun. The pronoun ‘which’ can co-occur with a noun, in which case it functions as a determiner. In the determiner function, the pronoun generally follows the noun although it can also precede it in situations of emphasis/stress. We illustrate this distribution using nouns from classes 2, 3 and 5.

- 21a. *bîlâmfi búú* oranges which “Which oranges?”  
 b. *ɲgárfí wúú* gun which “Which gun?”  
 c. *nîsðŋ núú* tooth which “Which tooth?”
- 22a. *búú bîlâmfi* which oranges “Which oranges?”  
 b. *wúú ɲgárfí* which gun “Which gun?”  
 c. *núú nîsðŋ* which tooth “Which tooth?”

The use of the other interrogatives (‘what’, ‘who’ and ‘where’) is illustrated in the sentences in (23).

- (23) a. *ò jò’ó mâŋgjà wáá nè kè ?*  
 ò jò’ó m-àŋgjà w-á-â nì àkè  
 you marry 1-woman 1-the-DEF with what  
 “What did you pay as bride price for the woman.”
- b. *tsó’ó wá kî lè’ðsí mbòó mí láá fó?*  
 tsó’ó w-á à kî lè’ðsê ìm-bòò m-í láá fó  
 1-partridge 1-the 1-SM P2 hide 6-eggs 6-its DEF where  
 “Where did the partridge hide its eggs?”
- c. *mbê wò fâ kwí’í?*  
 mbé wò à fá à-kwí’ì  
 cond. who SM give 7-answer  
 “Who can give an answer?”

## 7. The relative pronoun

The relative pronoun in Bafut is marked by the stem -î which, as usual with pronouns in Bafut, takes concord consonants determined by the morphological class of the noun it refers to. Following is a table of the concord consonants.

Table XVI: Concord consonants of the relative pronoun

Noun Class	Concord consonant	Full pronoun
1	j-	jîî
2	b-	bîî
3	j-	jîî
5	n-	nîî
6	m-	mîî
7	j-	jîî
8	dʒ-	dʒîî
9	j-	jîî
10	dʒ-	dʒîî
19	f-	fîî

The relative pronoun is used in relative clauses to express the meaning ‘the one(s) which/that’. In every instance of its use, it is optionally preceded by a demonstrative determiner and followed by the complementiser *mó* (for more on the relative clause, cf chapter 5). Following are some examples of the use of the relative pronoun.

(24) a. *wá jîî mó sî kî jùú láá.*

w-á j-îî mó sî kî yúú láá  
 1-Dem. 1-Pron Comp we P2 buy DEF  
 “The one which/that we (you and I) bought.”

b. *nîbà’ à kî jùá njá nîî mó sî kî jô láá.*

nîbà’ à à kî jùú láá nj-á n-îî mó sî kî jô láá  
 Niba SM P2 buy DEF 6-Dem. 6-Pron. Comp we P2 see DEF  
 “Niba bought the one that we (you and I) saw.”

## 8. Reflexive pronouns

Bafut employs four main strategies for reflexivity in clauses. In the first strategy, the reflexive marker consists of a bare noun stem. In the second, an ordinary object pronoun is used reflexively. The third strategy involves use of a lexical item plus a possessive pronoun while in the fourth strategy, the reflexive structure is an oblique pronoun plus a lexical item. These strategies hardly provide productive patterns as they are confined to uses in very restricted contexts. We examine each strategy in turn.

### 8.1 Bare noun stem

The bare noun stem *nô* ‘body’ can be used reflexively with a very small number of verbs that deal with (grooming) taking care of the body (bathing, applying lotion, dressing, etc.) In their normal usage, that is, the non-reflexive usage, these verbs take as complement *nô* plus a possessive pronoun. However, in contexts where the speaker intends to establish coreference between the subject and the object, the possessive pronoun can be omitted and in this case, the bare noun *nô* assumes a reflexive interpretation. Consider the following examples:

(25) a. *bî jî’í nî jî.*

bî H à jî’í nô j-î  
 Bih Prog SM wash 9-body 9-her

“Bih is washing her body/taking a bath”.

b. *bĩ ʃĩ'í n-ô*.

bĩ H á ʃĩ'í n-ô  
 Bih Prog SM wash 9-body  
 “Bih is washing/bathing herself”.

(26) *bĩ ʃĩ'í n-ô sùù*.

bĩ H á ʃĩ'í n-ô sùù  
 Bih Prog SM wash 9-body Suh  
 “Bih is bathing Suh”.

The first example shows the verb *ʃĩ'í* “wash” in its normal usage where it is followed by the noun *n-ô* “body” and a possessive pronoun. This example can be translated in three ways: “Bih is washing her body”, “Bih is bathing herself” or simply “Bih is bathing”. In the (b) counterpart, there is no doubt that subject–object coreference is involved and so the possessive pronoun is omitted and the bare noun stem then assumes a reflexive function. In the third example in (26), coreference is not intended and so a reflexive counterpart is impossible.

## 8.2 Ordinary object pronoun

In this strategy, personal pronouns are used for first and third persons to express reflexivity. The second person pronoun is hardly used reflexively in this strategy. The pronouns used here are ordinary object pronouns which have assumed an additional reflexive interpretation in order to denote reference identity between the subject and object of a clause. The verb that regularly appears in this paradigm is the verb *wé'é* “wear (a dress)”. However, two other verbs - *ʃĩ'í* “wash” and *jó'ó* “apply lotion to body” referring to care of the body are equally acceptable in this context. No other verb, to the best of my knowledge, can occur in this context. Here are some examples:

(27) a. *mè kì wè'é yá sîgîni*

mè kì wé'é yà sîgîni  
 I P2 wear me nice  
 “I dressed myself nicely.”

b. *bĩ kì jò'ó jí sîgîni ní bìrì*.

bĩ à kì jó'ó jì sîgîni ní bìrì  
 Bih SM P2 rub her nice with 1-camwood  
 “Bih rubbed herself nicely with camwood.”  
 “Bih rubbed her/him (some other person) nicely with camwood.”

c. *mámfɔ lé nʃĩ'í jí sîgîni ní ndòrì*.

mámfɔ à lé N-ʃĩ'í jì sîgîni ní ñ-dòrì  
 Queenmother SM P3 N-wash her nice with 9-juice from climber plant  
 “The queen mother washed herself well with juice from a special climber plant.”  
 “The queen mother washed her/him well with juice from a special climber plant.”

While the example in (a) has a clear reflexive reading, the others in (b) and (c) do not. The (b) and (c) examples are ambiguous between a reflexive reading in which the pronoun *jí* is coreferential with the subject of the clause and a disjoint reference reading in which the

pronoun refers to a participant different from the subject. It is only the speech act (situation) that can help clear this ambiguity.

### 8.3. “Body” noun plus possessive pronoun

What we have labeled here as the “body” noun plus pronoun is a reflexivisation strategy in which the reflexive marker is a complex unit comprising a lexical item *ìbìí nû* “trunk (of body) plus a possessive pronoun. The noun *ìbìí nû* itself is a compound derived from the associative construction *ìbìí* “trunk” and *nû* “body”. The associative marker (AM) in this construction is a floating high tone which docks leftwards onto the final TBU of *ìbìí*. In this reflexivisation strategy, a clause which literally would mean X does something to X’s body receives a reflexive interpretation in specific contexts.

- (28) a. *mà kì jǎ bìnú yá mûm ñkì`ì.*  
 mà kì jǎ ì-bìnú γ-à mûm ñ-kì`ì  
 I P2 see 7-body 7-my in 9-mirror  
 “I saw myself in the mirror.”
- b. *kwímáñkǎ`ǎ tígí ñkwétí bìnú jí ní ñkábí já.*  
 kwímáñkǎ`ǎ á tígí ñ-kwétí ì-bìnú j-ì ní ñ-kábí j-á  
 1-Tortoise 1-SM then N-help 7-trunk 7-his with 9-money 9-the  
 body  
 “Tortoise then helped himself with the money.”
- c. *lǎǎ wá lé sí ẓwítí bìnú jí nǎ fâ`à.*  
 1-lǎǎ w-á à lé sí ẓwítí ì-bìnú j-ì ní à-fâ`à  
 horse 1-the 1-SM P2 Asp kill 3-trunk body 3-his with 7-work  
 “The horse used to kill itself with work (used to overwork itself).”

It is worth noting that two morphological variants of the word for “trunk of body” are attested in the language. These are *mbìnú* (class 1) and *ìbìnú* (class 3). While some speakers use these two words interchangeably, the general tendency is to use *mbìnú* where the literal meaning “trunk of body” is intended and *ìbìnú* when a reflexive interpretation is involved. Thus in the example in (28a) for instance, if *mbìnú* substitutes *ìbìnú*, the meaning we get is one in which the subject saw the trunk of his body (and not the entire body/self) in the mirror. The word for “body” *nû* can be used in this sentence without *ìbìí* “trunk” to refer to a situation where the subject saw his/her body in the mirror. This is however not a reflexive interpretation and the use of *nû* alone in the other examples in (28b) and (28c) is ungrammatical. Finally, we note that the *ìbìnú* plus pronoun strategy is the most productive in the language as it is used with a variety of verbs including verbs denoting physical action, cognition, and emotion.

### 8.4 The pronoun plus “owner” noun strategy

This strategy makes use of a pronoun plus a lexical item *mbôñ* “owner”. Elsewhere, the lexical item occurs regularly in associative constructions such as *mbôñ ndùgì* “family head” which literally means “owner of compound”. The pronominal form which corresponds to the regular oblique personal pronouns discussed in section 1.4.2 can occur in all three persons (singular and plural). First we list the reflexive forms for all three persons and then present sentences illustrating the use of this reflexivisation strategy.

- (29) Reflexive forms
- |          |                  |
|----------|------------------|
| məmbôŋ   | “myself”         |
| ɣòmbôŋ   | “myself (sg)”    |
| júmbôŋ   | “him/her/itself” |
| bì’ímbôŋ | “ourselves”      |
| búmbôŋ   | “yourselves”     |
| bómbôŋ   | “themselves”     |

- (30) a. *mə kɪ ɣà ’ásó ɣá məmbôŋ.*

mə	kɪ	ɣà	’ásó	ɣá	məmbôŋ
I	P2	praise	me	myself	

“I praised myself.”

- b. *ò kɪ lə́nsə ɣó ɣòmbôŋ.*

ò	kɪ	lə́nsə	ɣó	ɣòmbôŋ
you(sg)	P2	hurt	you(sg)	yourself

“you hurt yourself.”

- c. *à kɪ ʒwítə jí júmbôŋ.*

à	kɪ	ʒwítə	jì	júmbôŋ
he/she	P2	kill	him/her	him/herself

“He/she destroyed him/herself.”

Notice that the verb is followed by the regular object pronoun which is absent in the English translation. Thus, the example in (a) literally means “I praised me myself”. This leaves one with the impression that the reflexive form is a sort of intensifier which also serves an appositive function. This claim is supported by two facts. First, there is an audible phonetic break between the object pronoun and the reflexive complex. Secondly, if the object pronoun is omitted, the sentence loses its reflexive interpretation. In such cases, the object of the verb is implied and the reflexive complex serves to emphasize that the action of the verb was carried out specifically by the subject and no one else. Thus, if the object is omitted in the example in (30a), it is implied that someone was praised and this praising was done by the subject (i.e. *mə* “I”) and no one else.

The P-*mbôŋ* reflexive exhibits many other distributional properties which mark it out as distinct from other reflexives in Bafut. For instance, it can be positioned immediately after its antecedent in contexts where the situation described comes as a surprise to the speaker as in the following example uttered in a context where Ambe has been advising people not to burn the bushes.

- (31) *àmbé júmbóŋ kɪ tɔ́ ntá’á.*

àmbé	júmbóŋ	à	kɪ	tɔ́	ntá’á
Ambe	himself	SM	P2	burn	hill

Ambe himself burnt a hill.”

The antecedent and the reflexive constitute a phonetic group and an audible phonetic break is noticed only after the reflexive.

Reflexives in Bafut generally do not occur in a position where they are not controlled by an antecedent which is certainly not unusual crosslinguistically. The P-*mbôŋ* reflexive however seems to have the liberty to occur in sentence initial position where emphasis is intended.

- (32) *màmbôŋ mə ká ɣèé dígɔ fá'á jú.*  
 màmbôŋ mə ká ɣèé á à-dìgì à-fà'à j-ù  
 myself I F0 go to 7-place 7-work 7-his  
 "I myself will go to his office."

This sentence is uttered in a situation where some form of threat is involved; the speaker will go to the office probably to confront the person in the office for some wrongdoing.

One interesting property of reflexivisation in Bafut is that the antecedent can occur in object position. As we have seen already, the most common position of the antecedent is the subject position. When an associative (genitive) construction occurs in subject position, the reflexive marker can be construed only with the head noun. We illustrate this with the *bìínû*-P reflexive and the P-*mbôŋ* reflexive.

- (33) a. *bàŋgjà bí mfɔ wá lɪntɔ bìínû wáá sîgínì.*  
 bàŋgjà b-í ì-fɔ w-á b-í lɪntɔ ì-bìínû w-áá sîgínì  
 2-women 2-AM 1-chief 1-the 2-SM look 3-body 3-their nice  
 "The chief's wives take good care of themselves."

- b. \**bàŋgjà bí mfɔ wá á lɪntɔ ìbìínû jí îgínì*  
 women AM chief the SM look body his nice

- (34) a. *mú bìbú'ú wá kì lə́nsɔ jí júmbôŋ.*  
 mú L bì-bú'ú w-á à kì lə́nsɔ jí júmbôŋ  
 1-child 1-AM 2-baboons 1-the 1-SM P2 hurt him himself  
 "The young one of the baboons hurt itself."

- b. \**mú H bìbú'ú wá bí kì lə́nsɔ wáá bómbôŋ*  
 child AM baboon the SM P2 hurt him himself

In very special constructions, a noun in object position can serve as an antecedent to a reflexive pronoun that appears in oblique position.

- (35) *ìfɔ kì ɣá'ásɔ mbé mbí'í ŋgáá jì júmbôŋ.*  
 ì-fɔ w-á à kì ɣá'ásɔ àmbé mbí'í ŋgáá j-ì jú-mbôŋ  
 1-chief 1-the 1-SM P2 praise Ambe because 9-sake 9-his himself  
 "The chief praised Ambe for his (Ambe's) sake (lit. because of himself)."

Constructions of this type are rare and constitute the only instances where a reflexive marker is construed with a noun in object position. Otherwise, antecedents of reflexive pronouns in Bafut, except in special cases of emphasis, are generally restricted to occurring in subject position.

## 9. Emphatic pronouns

Emphatic pronouns in Bafut are generally used to mark either insistence or surprise. In the case of surprise, the emphatic pronoun is used in a context where the speaker does not expect a certain action from the listener or a third party. The emphatic pronoun generally comprises a consonant followed by a long vowel. The only exception is the first person plural form in which the long vowel is separated by a glottal stop. In larger constructions, the emphatic pronoun occurs immediately following the verb. Following is a list of Bafut emphatic pronouns and illustrations of their use in larger constructions.

(36)	nàâ	“I/me”
	nòô	“you”
	níî	“he/him”
		“she/her”
	jí’î	“we/us”
	yúû	“you”
	wáâ	“they/them”

- (37) a. *mó yèè nàá ndánwì*  
 m̀ yèè nàâ á ñ-dánwì  
 I go me to 9-church  
 “As for me, I am going to church”
- b. *nìbá’á yèè níí ndánwì*  
 nìbà’á à yèè nàâ á ñ-dánwì  
 I SM go me to 9-church  
 “As for Niba, he is going to church”
- c. *bù ló ñyèè yúú ndánwì*  
 bù lǒ yèè yúû á ñ-dánwì  
 I F0 go you to 9-church  
 “As for you, you should go to church”

The use of emphatic pronouns is very common in Bafut as well as in many other Grassfields Bantu languages and their influence on second language learning is very visible. Sentences like *I am going me to church* are very common in the speech of Bafut learners of English.

## Conclusion

In the discussion of pronouns in this chapter, we have laid emphasis principally on their function and distribution. The internal constituency of the personal pronoun forms was discussed in some detail. However, apart from saying that the compound pronoun is formed by combining this and that morpheme, we did not get into the exact mechanism of this combination. This will make an interesting study for Bafut and related Grassfields Bantu languages. We also mentioned agreement between the noun and a pronoun. With the exception of the human pronouns, all other pronouns exhibit this agreement phenomenon which is rather rich in the language. In chapter 5, we return to this in greater detail illustrating the various agreement patterns that hold between nouns and related elements including pronominals.

## Chapter 5 The noun phrase

### Introduction

The present chapter focuses on the modifiers of the noun such as adjectives, determiners, pronouns, genitives, etc. I describe the form and meaning of each modifier as well as its distribution relative to the noun and to other elements within the noun phrase. The expression “noun phrase”, as used in this chapter, has no theoretical import. It is used simply to refer to a group of words made up of a noun and some other word which specifies, qualifies or describes the noun. For ease of exposition, we categorize the noun phrase into simple and complex noun phrases; the simple noun phrase being a noun or pronominal element only or a noun modified by a single modifier and the complex noun phrase being a noun modified by a complex unit such as a genitive phrase or a relative clause.

### 1. The simple noun phrase

There are basically two categories of the simple noun phrase. The first category contains single nouns or pronouns that stand alone and function as subject or object while the second category contains a noun modified by simple modifiers such as determiners, adjectives and genitives. Having discussed the form and meaning of individual nouns and pronouns in chapters 2, 3, and 4, the first category of the simple noun phrase will, therefore, no longer retain our attention in this chapter. Consequently, we delve straight into the second category which consists of a noun and a modifier channeling the discussion to focus more on the form, meaning and distribution of the modifier and less on the noun since this has already been covered in chapter 2.

#### 1.1. The noun and determiners

Determiners constitute a very restricted class of words in Bafut. They are generally positioned immediately after the noun they specify and obligatorily take agreement markers determined by the class of the noun they specify. The class of determiners includes the definite/indefinite articles, demonstratives, possessives, and interrogatives. In the preceding chapter, we described demonstratives, possessives and interrogatives mainly as pronouns but also as modificational elements which co-occur with and help to specify the noun. In this section therefore, we will describe only the definite/indefinite articles. The reader is referred to the relevant sections of the preceding chapter for a discussion on the use of the demonstrative, possessive and interrogative as determiners.

#### A. *The indefinite article*

Bafut has no indefinite article. Any noun standing and functioning alone as subject or object in a sentence is interpreted as indefinite. Nouns in both the singular and plural forms can be used in this way and in this usage, the noun often has a generic interpretation.

- 1 (a) *àkíkúŋó ní sín bìlì*  
à-kíkúŋ à ní sín bì-lì  
7-owl SM is bird 2-witches  
“An owl is a witches’s totem.”
- b. *bìlì fê’ê kíkúŋ nítúgò*  
bì-lì b-í fê’ê à-kíkúŋ nì-túgò  
2-witches 2-SM come out 7-owl 5-night  
“Witches transform into owls during the night.”

#### B. *The definite article*



The definite article in Bafut consists of the vowel *á* and a concord consonant marking agreement between the definite article and the noun it specifies. The table below lists the different concord consonants that the definite article takes along side the full form of the definite article.

Table I: Concord consonants of the definite article

Noun class	Concord consonant	Definite article
1	w-	w-á
2	bj-	bj-á
3	w-	w-á
5	nj-	nj-á
6	mj-	mj-á
7	j-	j-á
8	dʒj-	dʒj-á
9	j-	j-á
10	dʒj-	dʒj-á
19	fj-	fj-á

In the noun phrase, the unmarked position of the definite article is after the noun it specifies. However, in contexts of contrastive focus reference, the article precedes the noun. In this case, a low-tone vowel morpheme is attached to the stem vowel (of the definite article) and intonation rises. The examples in (2) with the noun preceding the definite article illustrate the most neutral, unmarked and common way of expressing definiteness in Bafut. The examples in (3) on the other hand, with the noun following the definite article, can only be interpreted with contrastive focus reference to a salient noun (distinct from all others) already mentioned in the domain of discourse.

- (2) a. *lú'ú wá*                      b. *bìlú'ú bjá*                      c. *àkâŋ já*                      d. *fîŋgwâŋ fjá*  
       lú'ú        w-á                      bî-lú'ú    bj-á                      à-kâŋ    j-á                      fî-ŋgwâŋ    fj-á  
       1-spoon    1-the                      2-spoons    2-the                      7-dish    7-the                      19-salt        19-the  
       "The spoon."                      "The spoons."                      "The dish."                      "The salt."
- (3) a. *wáà lú'ú*                      b. *bjáà bìlú'ú*                      c. *jáà kâŋ*                      d. *fjáà fîŋgwâŋ*  
       w-á-à    lú'ú                      bj-á-à    bî-lú'ú                      j-á-à    à-kâŋ                      fj-á-à    fî-ŋgwâŋ  
       1-the-Foc    1-spoon                      2-the-Foc    2-spoons                      7-the-Foc    7-dish                      19-the-Foc    19-salt  
       "The spoon."                      "The spoons."                      "The dish."                      "The salt."

In the focus examples in (3), the definite article combines with a low-toned vowel morpheme to produce the focus meaning. This focus morpheme, as we will see in chapter 11, bears various tones depending on the phonetic environment and on the kind of focus involved. In the particular instance illustrated in (3), the focus morpheme bears a low tone even though intonation generally rises in these instances of contrastive focus reference.

The definite article can co-occur with one other determiner within the same noun phrase. In this case, the definite article always comes in final position. Thus, we can have structures such as (i) Noun-Demonstrative-Definite article, (ii) Noun-Possessive-Definite article, (iii) Noun-Interrogative-Definite article. In contexts involving contrastive focus reference, the demonstrative, possessive or interrogative can precede the noun but the definite article always comes last in the noun phrase. Following are some examples.

- (4) a.            nì-tú'ú nìi njá  
                   n n-ìi nj-á  
                   ì-tú'ú  
                   5-potato 5-that 5-the  
                   “That potato yonder (the one  
                   already mentioned).”
- b.    nîi nìtú'ú njâ  
           n-îi        nì-tú'ú nj-á  
                   5-that-Foc 5-potato 5-the  
                   “That particular potato yonder (the  
                   one already mentioned).”
- (5) a.            bìsîŋ bá bjâ  
                   | b-ă bj-á  
                   ì-sîŋ  
                   2-birds 2-my 2-the  
                   “Those birds of mine (the ones  
                   already mentioned).”
- b.    báà bìsîŋ bjâ  
           b-áà        bì-sîŋ bj-á  
                   2-my-Foc 2-birds 2-the  
                   “Those birds of mine (not  
                   yours/his, etc.) (the ones already  
                   mentioned).”
- (6) a.            fînsâŋ fúú fjà  
                   fî f-úú        fj-á  
                   -nsâŋ  
                   19-broom 19-which 19-the  
                   “Which of the brooms?”
- b.    fúú fînsâŋ fjà  
           f-úú        fî-nsâŋ fj-á  
                   19-which        19-broom 19-the  
                   “Which of the brooms?”

In the examples in (6), the position of the interrogative determiner has no particular effect on the interpretation of the utterance. If anything, the occurrence of the interrogative in initial position may just signal emphasis on the part of the speaker.

## 1.2. The noun and adjectives

Adjectives in Bafut pattern into three broad categories namely, *pure adjectives*, *derived adjectives* and *adjectival nouns*. Pure adjectives are very few and are, for the most part, limited to colour and quality. Derived adjectives constitute a reduced-relative type construction formed from regular stative verbs and used to express adjectival meanings such as quality and other physical properties. Adjectival nouns, on their part, are ordinary nouns which are made to function like attributive adjectives in an N1-N2 type construction.

### A. Pure adjectives

Pure adjectives are marked by a prefix governed by the class of the noun it qualifies. The tone of the adjective prefix is determined, to a large extent, by noun class and tone of the last syllable of the preceding noun. Generally, the adjective prefix is L if preceded by a H tone root and H if preceded by a L tone root. However, the adjective prefix is H if the noun is from class 1a, 2, 8 or 10. For more on such tone changes, see Neba (2007) and Mfonyam (1989). The different adjective prefixes are listed and illustrated below.

Table 6.II: Adjective prefixes

Noun class	Adjective prefix	Sample adjective ('nice')
1	jîN-	jîN-sígìnì
2	bî-	bî-sígìnì
3	jî-	jî-sígìnì
5	nî-	nî-sígìnì
6	mî-	mî-sígìnì
7	jî-	yî-sígìnì
8	dzî-	dzî-sígìnì
9	jîN-	jîN-sígìnì
10	dzî-	dzî-sígìnì
19	fî-	fî-sígìnì

The adjective prefix (concord morpheme) for classes 1 and 9 ends in a homorganic nasal which assimilates to the place of articulation features of the initial consonant of the adjective stem. The number of pure adjectives is extremely small. Only four of these are attested: -sígìnì 'good/nice', -bàgítí 'red/ripe' -bí'í 'raw' and -fî 'new'. In the noun phrase, the pure adjective follows the noun it qualifies and precedes the determiner if there is one.

- (7) a. *kàrì jînsígìnì*      b. *ndá jîmfíí já*  
           jîN-sígìnì                      ñ-dâ      jîm-fíí      j-á  
           àrì  
           1-ring    1-nice                      9-house    9-new      9-the  
           "A nice finger ring."                      "The new house."
- c. *ñibòò níbí'í*      d. *fîndzós fîbágítí fjá*  
           í ní-bí'í                      fî-ndzós    fî-bágítí    fj-á  
           ì-bòò  
           5-egg    5-raw                      19-frog    19-red      19-the  
           "A raw egg."                      "The red frog."

### B. Derived adjectives

A large number of the adjectives in Bafut are derived from verbs by prefixing a regular adjective prefix to the verb stem. Apart from the fact that these adjectives attribute a quality/physical property to the denotation of the noun they modify, and also follow the noun and agree with it in number and class as pure adjectives do, they behave otherwise as pure verbs in the syntax. For instance, they can be reduplicated, just like verbs, to emphasize the degree of a quality. The second element in the reduplicated form always takes a nominalized form of the corresponding verb. The example in (8a) shows the ordinary occurrence of a derived adjective in a noun phrase. In (8b), we illustrate a reduplicated derived adjective and in (8c) we illustrate a reduplicated verb form.

- (8) a. *nìbò'ò nílì*  
 . *nì-bò'ò nì-lì*  
 5-pumpkin 5-sweet  
 “A sweet pumpkin.”
- b. *nìbò'ò nìlìnlí*  
*nì-bò'ò nì-lì-n-lí*  
 5-pumpkin 5-sweet-N-sweet  
 “A very sweet pumpkin.”

- c. *m̀bú já k̀ì j̀à'ónj̀à'ò*  
*j-á ì k̀ì j̀á'ó-n-j̀à'ò*  
 -bù

9-dog 9-the SM P2 Cry-N-cry  
 “The dog cried/wept a lot.”

Reduplication of the type in (8b) is however limited to adjectives that are derived from unaccusative verbs<sup>1</sup>. Emphasis with an adjective derived from a transitive verb is done with the use of a consecutivisation structure in a passive-like relative clause as in (9).

- (9) *m̀ìkúú mù m̀ó bí láánláâ*  
*m m-ù m̀ó bí láá-n-láâ*

*ì-kúù*

6-beans 6-these that they Cook-N-cook  
 “These over-cooked beans.”

The nasal element in the verbal complex in (9) is a consecutivisation morpheme which serves to embed a series of consecutive events. See chapter 11 for more on consecutivisation.

The derived adjective can also be used predicatively. In this usage, it can occur with tense-aspect markers (10b), can be negated (10c), can take a verbal extension (10d), and can be reduplicated (10e).

- (10) a. *m̀ìlù'ù mù m̀í lì* b. *m̀ìlù'ù mù m̀í k̀ì sí lì*  
*m̀ì m-ú m-í lì* *m̀ì m-ú m-í k̀ì sí lì*

-lù'ù

-lù'ù

6-palmwine 6-this 6-SM sweet  
 “This palm wine is sweet.”

6-palmwine 6-this 6-SM P2 Asp sweet  
 “(Yesterday) this palm wine was sweet.”

- c. *(kàá) m̀ìlù'ù mù m̀í sí lì* d. *m̀ìlù'ù mù m̀í lìn-t̀è*  
*m̀ì-lù'ù m-ú m-í sí lì* *m̀ì-lù'ù m-ú m-í lìn-t̀è*

*kàá)*

<sup>1</sup> I call them unaccusative verbs because like the Italian verbs of the *essere* class and English verbs of motion and change of state, the Bafut verbs in question lack an external argument and do not assign accusative Case. The Bafut verbs in question therefore seem to be in the right semantic class to be unaccusatives.

Neg	6-Palm wine	6-this	6-SM	Neg	sweet	6-Palm	6-this	6-SM	sweet+Ext.
						wine			
	“This palm wine is not sweet.”					“This palm wine is slightly sweet.”			

e. *mìlù'ù mû mí lìn líí*  
 mì m-ú m-í lî-n-líî  
 -lù'ù  
 6-palmwine 6-this 6-SM Sweet-N-sweet  
 “This palmwine is very sweet.”

Some derived adjectives consist of a prefix, a stem and a suffix.

(11) a.	<i>ñgárfí jìsà' àtì</i>	b.	<i>ñkjè dzífàñkì</i>	c.	<i>ndùgì jìñyà' àtì</i>
	ñ-gárfî jî-sà' à-tî		ñ- dzî-fàñ-kî		ñ-dùgì jìñ-yà' à-tî
			kjè		
	3-gun 3-long-suff “A long gun.”		10-baskets 10-big-suff “Big baskets.”		9-compound 9-large-suff “A large compound.”

The above examples are actually comparative forms used attributively. Thus (11a) for instance means ‘a gun which is slightly longer than ordinary (unspecified) guns’. Notice the difference in the forms of the suffix: the form *tî* is used with singular nouns to express the meaning of ‘slightly’ while *kî* is used with the plural form of the adjective to indicate that the quality attributed affects many objects. These suffixes are ordinary verb extensions which, in the verb paradigm, express various subtle meanings. We return to the subtle differences in the forms of extensions in chapter 6 where we discuss the verb and its different extensions.

### C. Adjectival nouns

Adjectival nouns occur generally in pre-nominal position where they attribute a quality to the noun they precede. In the morphosyntax, they exhibit ordinary nominal properties but modify the head noun in the way an ordinary adjective does. There are two subgroups of adjectival nouns.

#### Group A

Group A adjectival nouns are ordinary nouns which function as adjectives when used to modify a following noun. A noun phrase formed with a group A adjectival noun is similar to what Aarts (1998) calls a “Binominal NP” in English such as [*a brat of a minister*]. In Aarts’s analysis, [*a brat of a*] is a modificational adjunct of NP while [*minister*] is the head of the entire construction. Some of the Bafut nouns which make up group A adjectival nouns belong in noun class 1 while others belong in noun class 7. The examples in (12-13) represent an almost exhaustive list of such nouns (all denoting human beings) while (14) illustrates the use of these nouns in their adjectival function.

(12). Noun Class 1

- a. *̀̀̀-lwìn* 'An old person.'  
 b. *̀̀̀-đh̄* 'An elder.'  
 c. *̀̀̀-jèrê* 'A thief.'

(13). Noun Class 7

- a. *̀̀̀-tîrî* 'A fool.'  
 b. *̀̀̀-kĩkó'ô* 'A dumb person (mute, unable to speak)'  
 c. *̀̀̀-dzòŋ* 'A giant.'

- (14) a. *̀̀̀-lwìn m̀̀̀ngjè* 'An old woman.'  
 b. *̀̀̀-tîrî m̀̀̀ngjè* 'A foolish woman.'

When a modifier, such as an adjective or determiner, is used in constructions like (14), the modifier is generally construed with the initial noun. In the example in (15), the definite article is construed with the initial noun as shown by the agreement morphology it bears<sup>2</sup> (the figures in the glosses indicate noun class).

(15) *̀̀̀-tîrî m̀̀̀ngjè j̄á*

*̀̀̀-áŋgjè j̄-á*

-tîrî

7-fool 1-woman 7-the  
 "The stupid woman."

The fact that the adjectival noun (i.e. the initial noun) triggers agreement on the definite article in this example is not surprising given its status as an ordinary noun. What is surprising is that even though these nouns function as adjectives, they can still bear plural morphology as ordinary nouns do. In examples like the one above, plural morphology must attach to both nouns as shown in (16). Attaching plural morphology to just one, but not the other of the two nouns, is unacceptable.

- (16) a. *b̀̀̀lwìn bí b̀̀̀ngjè* b. *\*b̀̀̀ lwìn bí m̀̀̀ngjè* c. *\*̀̀̀-lwìn  
 b̀̀̀ngjè*  
 b. *b-í b-̀̀̀ngjè* \* *bí m-̀̀̀ngjè* \* *b-̀̀̀ngjè*  
*̀̀̀-lwìn* *b̀̀̀-lwìn* *̀̀̀-lwìn*  
 2-old 2-linker 2-women 2-old 2-linker 1-woman 1-old 2-women  
 "Old women."

<sup>2</sup> Construing the definite article with the following noun is only very marginally acceptable to some speakers of Bafut. In a closely related language, Nweh, a modifier in such examples can only be construed with the initial noun.

As we notice in this example, the adjectival noun is linked to the noun it qualifies by a linker which has the form/shape of an associative morpheme. We cannot however treat such utterances as constituting an associative noun phrase because the interpretation we get is clearly one in which the initial noun qualifies the following noun. Thus (16) can only be interpreted as ‘women who are old’ and not ‘old people who are women.’ Also, as will become obvious from the section on the associative noun phrase (section 3.1), the second noun in constructions like (16) does not stand in any of the associative relations to the head noun.

### Group B

Group B adjectival nouns are forms that look like nouns in their morphological composition but have the meaning of an adjective when used with an immediately following noun. Some examples of these forms are given below.

- (17) a.            *má-* ‘large.’  
                   *mù’ù*
- b. *má-bò’ò*      ‘plump.’  
 c. *mú-kùm*       ‘short.’  
 d. *mû-ntsíri*     ‘small.’  
 e. *mú-dîgî*       ‘tiny’

The forms in (17) take a prefix (*ma-*, *mu-*) which relates to size like the diminutive *fi-* of noun class 19. Although we refer to them as prefixes, they do not relate to ordinary noun class prefixes in any way. In other contexts, these “prefixes” or their contracted forms are used as ordinary nouns e.g. *mû* ‘child’, *máâ* ‘grandmother’.

Some of the roots in these examples are found elsewhere as ordinary noun roots. However, the meanings of the ordinary noun roots are not related to the meanings of the items in (17) thus making it hard to claim that the items in (17) are derived from independent nouns. The roots that occur elsewhere as independent nouns are *ikùm* ‘name’ (cf 17c) and (b) *àdîgî* ‘place’ (cf 17e).

When used with an immediately following noun, group B adjectival nouns, like their group A counterparts, attribute a quality to the denotation of the following noun. Following are some illustrations of the use of group B adjectival nouns.

- |         |                                   |    |                    |    |                     |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----|--------------------|----|---------------------|
| (18) a. | <i>mûdîgî ḡkxì</i>                | b. | <i>múkùm</i>       | c. | <i>mámù’ù</i>       |
|         |                                   |    | <i>ḡtì</i>         |    | <i>ndâ</i>          |
|         | <i>mû-dîgî ḡ-kxì</i>              |    | <i>mû-kùm à-tì</i> |    | <i>má-mù’ù ḡ-dâ</i> |
|         | Pref-tiny 1-water                 |    | Pref-short 7-stick |    | Pref-large house    |
|         | “A very small quantity of water.” |    | “A short stick.”   |    | “A large house.”    |

In the example in (18a), the final vowel of “tiny” changes to a shwa due to the following nasal consonant. The presence of a high tone on the shwa is probably the reflex of some linking element.

All the categories of adjectives can co-occur with a determiner in the same noun phrase with the determiner always in final position. If there are two determiners co-occurring

with the adjective, it is usual for both to follow the adjective with the definite article in absolute final position. Only very special constructions allow a determiner to precede the adjective. In the translations of the following examples, NL means near the listener.

- (19) a. *mìkòḡ mǐsà ’àkí má mjâ*                      b. *fìḡkóbí fìlwìn fíí fjâ*  
           mì-kòḡ    mì-sà’ákí    m-á    mj-á                      fì-ḡkóbí    fì-lwìn    f-íí    fj-á  
           6-spears    6-long            6-my    6-the                      19-statue    19-old    19-that    19-the  
           “Those long spears of mine.”                      “The old statue there (NL).”
- c. *mìkòḡ má, mǐsà ’àkí mjâ*                      b. *fìḡkóbí fíí, fìlwìn fjâ*  
           mì-kòḡ    m-á,    mì-sà’ákí    mj-á                      fì-ḡkóbí    f-íí,    fì-lwìn    fj-á  
           6-spears    6-my    6-long            6-the                      19-statue    19-that    19-old    19-the  
           “My spears, the long ones.”                      “That (NL) statue, the old one.”

The examples in (19a & b) illustrate the unmarked order in a noun phrase containing a noun, an adjective and two determiners. In these examples, the two determiners both follow the adjective. In the examples in (19c & d) one of the determiners precedes the adjective. These last examples are appositives in which the second part made up of the adjective and the definite article help to specify the noun.

### 1.3. The noun and numerals

Numerals in Bafut seem to be nouns that have been given a numeral meaning. As we will see in the ensuing discussion, most of the words that refer to numerals have singular and plural forms marked by prefixes that are identical to some of the noun class prefixes described in chapter 2. Within the noun phrase, the numeral generally follows the noun it describes and agrees with it in number and class. The numeral may however precede the noun but this under very strict conditions depending on whether the numeral is cardinal or ordinal.

#### A. Cardinal numerals

The cardinal number system in Bafut is based on the numbers ‘one’ through ‘ten’. The basic units, in their counting forms, are:

- |      |             |     |               |      |
|------|-------------|-----|---------------|------|
| (20) | <i>mó’ô</i> | ‘1’ | <i>ntó’ó</i>  | ‘6’  |
|      | <i>báà</i>  | ‘2’ | <i>sàmbà</i>  | ‘7’  |
|      | <i>tárê</i> | ‘3’ | <i>fwámó</i>  | ‘8’  |
|      | <i>kwàà</i> | ‘4’ | <i>nìbù’û</i> | ‘9’  |
|      | <i>ntáà</i> | ‘5’ | <i>nìwûm</i>  | ‘10’ |



The word for unit ‘nine’ has a variant *kwáli’í* which is identical in form to the introducing element in story-telling<sup>3</sup>. The word for unit 10 also has a variant - *tàwûm* used mostly in counting. The numbers ‘11’ to ‘19’ are obtained via addition in which process the word *ntsò* ‘and’ is placed after the number ‘10’.

(21)	<i>nìwûm ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘11’	<i>nìwûm ntsò ntó’ó</i>	‘16’
	<i>nìwûm ntsò báâ</i>	‘12’	<i>nìwûm ntsò sàm báâ</i>	‘17’
	<i>nìwûm ntsò táré</i>	‘13’	<i>nìwûm ntsò nífwáá</i>	‘18’
	<i>nìwûm ntsò nìkwà</i>	‘14’	<i>nìwûm ntsò nìbù’ú</i>	‘19’
	<i>nìwûm ntsò ntáà</i>	‘15’		

Notice that the words for ‘4’ in ‘14’ and ‘8’ in ‘18’ have a prefix *nì* which does not appear in the examples in (20). This suggests that the forms of the words for the numbers may be undergoing a reduction process. Probably the words for ‘1’, ‘2’, ‘3’ and ‘7’ listed in (20) above also had a prefix at some earlier stage in the history of the language. In fact, when used as adjectives following a noun, the words for 4 and 8 also have the *ní-*: *bìlú’ú bí-ní-kwà* ‘‘four spoons’’, *bìlú’ú bí-ní-fwá* ‘‘eight spoons’’.

The numbers ‘20’ to ‘99’ are obtained via multiplication and addition. Thus, the number ‘20’ is literally ‘two tens’, ‘30’ is ‘three tens’ and so forth while ‘21’ through ‘29’ is ‘two tens and one’, ‘two tens and two’, etc. In this formation process, the plural form of the word for ‘ten’ is used thus, the prefix changes from *nì-* to *mì-* (the same prefixes for ordinary class 5/6 nouns). This prefix determines the form of the adjective agreement morpheme *mí-* which is prefixed to the second number.

(22)	<i>mìwúm mímbáà</i>	‘20’	<i>mìwúm míntó’ó</i>	‘60’
	<i>mìwúm mímbáà ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘21’	<i>mìwúm míntó’ó ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘61’
	<i>mìwúm mímbáà ntsò báâ</i>	‘22’	<i>mìwúm míntó’ó ntsò báâ</i>	‘62’
	<i>mìwúm míntáré</i>	‘30’	<i>mìwúm mísàm báâ</i>	‘70’
	<i>mìwúm míntáré ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘31’	<i>mìwúm mísàm báâ ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘71’
	<i>mìwúm míntáré ntsò báâ</i>	‘32’	<i>mìwúm mísàm báâ ntsò báâ</i>	‘72’
	<i>mìwúm míníkwà</i>	‘40’	<i>mìwúm mínífwáá</i>	‘80’
	<i>mìwúm míníkwà ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘41’	<i>mìwúm mínífwáá ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘81’
	<i>mìwúm míníkwà ntsò báâ</i>	‘42’	<i>mìwúm mínífwáá ntsò báâ</i>	‘82’
	<i>mìwúm míntáà</i>	‘50’	<i>mìwúm mínífbù’ú</i>	‘90’
	<i>mìwúm míntáà ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘51’	<i>mìwúm mínífbù’ú ntsò m̀’ó</i>	‘91’
	<i>mìwúm míntáà ntsò báâ</i>	‘52’	<i>mìwúm mínífbù’ú ntsò báâ</i>	‘92’

Notice that in the numbers ‘20’ and ‘30’, the adjective representing ‘two’, *mímbáà* and ‘three’, *míntáré* has two prefixes: the adjective prefix *mí-* and a nasal *m-/n-*. Recall that in their basic forms cited in (20) above, the words for two and three (*báâ* and *táré*) do not have a prefix. The nasal consonant is probably the reflex of a noun class prefix thus supporting our guess above that numbers which appear without a prefix probably had one at some point in the history of the language. If this is correct, then all numbers in Bafut are nouns which have been attributed a numeral meaning.

Progressing up the counting schema, there is a new unit for ‘100’, *ìkxì* which can be multiplied by digits up to ‘9’ to obtain the numbers ‘200’ through ‘900’. Further, there is a new unit for ‘1000’, *ntfù’ù* and another one for ‘1,000,000’, *ìkâm*. Each of these can equally be multiplied by the digits ‘2’ through ‘9’ to obtain the relevant ‘thousands’ and ‘millions’. Numbers within the hundred, thousand and million brackets are obtained by addition using

<sup>3</sup> Story-telling evenings in Bafut usually begin with riddles. The person asking the riddle introduces his question with *kwáli’í* and the audience responds with *li’ìkwá*.

*ntsò* for digits from ‘1’ to ‘9’ and *nì* which literally means ‘with’ for ‘tens’. Thus ‘307’ for instance is ‘three hundreds and seven’ while ‘245’ is ‘two hundreds with four tens and five’.

(23) <i>ḡkxì</i>	‘100’
<i>ḡkxì dzíbáà</i>	‘200’
<i>ḡkxì dzíbáà ntsò nìfwáà</i>	‘208’
<i>ḡkxì dzíbáà nì mìwúm míníkwà ntsó ntáà</i>	‘245’
<i>ḡkxì dzítárê</i>	‘300’
<i>ḡkxì dzínìbù’ù</i>	‘900’
<i>ntfwù’ù</i>	‘1000’
<i>ntfwù’ù dzíníkwà</i>	‘4000’
<i>ntfwù’ù dzíníkwà ntsò tárê</i>	‘4003’
<i>ntfwù’ù dzíníkwà ní ḡkxì dzíntáà ní mìwúm míntó’ó ntsò tárê</i>	‘4563’
<i>ḡkám</i>	‘1,000,000’
<i>ḡkám dzísàmbáà</i>	‘7,000,000’

In counting money, *àbàá ḡkábí* ‘a bag of money’ is used for 100,000 (francs).

In the noun phrase, when a numeral is used to qualify a noun, the numeral follows the noun and agrees with it in class and number. The agreement morphemes on the numerals are identical to those of adjectives, reason why numerals in Bafut are treated as adjectives. Following is a list of the agreement morphemes that numerals employ.

Table III: Numeral prefixes

Noun class	Numeral prefix	Sample numeral (‘one & two’)	Noun + numeral	Gloss
1	<i>jîN-</i>	<i>jím-fùrì</i>	<i>fórí jìmfùrì</i>	‘one rat’
2	<i>bî-</i>	<i>bí-báà</i>	<i>bìsòrè bíbáà</i>	‘two witches’
3	<i>jî-</i>	<i>jì-fùrì</i>	<i>ìkxì jìfùrì</i>	‘one cane’
5	<i>nî-</i>	<i>ní-fùrì</i>	<i>nìsòḡ nìfùrì</i>	‘one tooth’
6	<i>mî-</i>	<i>mí-mbáà</i>	<i>mìḡgàḡ mímbáà</i>	‘two roots’
7	<i>jî-</i>	<i>jì-fùrì</i>	<i>àtós jìfùrì</i>	‘one calabash’
8	<i>dzî-</i>	<i>dzí-báà</i>	<i>ìsò dzíbáà</i>	‘two hoes’
9	<i>jîN-</i>	<i>jìm-fùrì</i>	<i>ḡgwú jìmfùrì</i>	‘one fowl’
10	<i>dzî-</i>	<i>dzí-báà</i>	<i>ḡgwú dzíbáà</i>	‘two fowls’
19	<i>fî-</i>	<i>fì-fùrì</i>	<i>fìndzòḡ fìfùrì</i>	‘one star’

The tone pattern on these prefixes undergoes the same kinds of modifications that the adjective prefixes undergo. The tone of the adjective prefix is determined, to a large extent, by noun class and tone of the last syllable of the preceding noun. Generally, the adjective prefix is L if preceded by a H tone root and H if preceded by a L tone root. However, the adjective prefix is H if the noun is from class 1a, 2, 8 or 10. It is however worth mentioning that the tonal modifications are not as simple and clear cut as described here. An exhaustive account of the tone situation in this context requires a more detailed phonological study than the one carried out in this study. See Neba (2007) and Mfonyam (1989) for a much more detailed study of the tone situation in Bafut.

In the noun phrase, the numeral regularly follows the noun it quantifies as can be seen from the fourth column of the table above. If a definite article, or some other determiner is involved, it follows the numeral except in contexts involving contrastive focus.

- (24) a. *nìbàṅ nífùrì njá* (b) *mìyà' à mímbáá mjá*  
 nì-bàṅ ní-fùrì nj-á m mí-mbáá mj-á  
 ì-yà' à  
 5-flute 5-one 5-the 6-jaws 6-two 6-the  
 “The single flute.” “The two jaws.”

- (c) *bjáà bìkáá bíbáà*  
 bj-áà bì-káá bí-báà  
 2-the-Foc 2-crabs 2-two  
 “The crabs (mentioned), two of them.”

- (d) *mìbàṅ míwúm mímbáà mjá* (e) *mìyà' á ntṣwù' ù dǝíntó' ó*  
 mì-bàṅ mì-wúm mì-m-báà mj-á mì ntṣwù' ù dǝí-ntó' ó  
 -yà' à  
 6-flutes 6-tens 6-N-two 6-the 6-jaws 9-thousand 9-six  
 “The twenty-two flutes (mentioned).” “Six thousand jaws.”

In the examples in (24a) and (24b), the noun and the numeral function like a compound such that the definite article modifies this compound and not just the noun. In the example in (24c), it is the definite article and the noun that function like a compound while the numeral acts as the modifier of this compound.

The examples in (24d) and (24e) illustrate another interesting agreement pattern in which multiples of 10 agree with 10, multiples of 100 agree with 100 and multiples of 1000 agree with 1000. Because this agreement is governed by 10, 100, and 1000, we class these units as nouns such that they fall in the singular class 3 and the plural class 10 forming gender 3/10.

### B. Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers serve to indicate order in a series. They are derived from ordinary nouns via prefixation of the adjective agreement morpheme. The nouns listed in (25) are used to express the notion ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘last’. Beyond the first, right up to the last-but-one member in the series, the word for ‘next’ is used.

- (25) *-ntṣàmbìì* ‘first (lit. one that comes in front)’  
*-àjòṅtì* ‘next (lit. one that follows)’  
*-nlwì' ìndzìim* ‘last (lit. one that ends (comes) at the back)’

The adjective agreement morpheme that these nouns take is, as expected, determined by the morphological class of the noun it modifies. In the case of the noun for ‘next’, the prefix vowel of the noun deletes since the phonology of the language does not allow a sequence of two non-identical vowels. Following are illustrations of the use of ordinal numbers.

- (26) a. *mú jìntṣàmbìì wá* b. *m̀bìjìjòṅtìjâ*

m jìn-tfàmbì w-á m-bî jì-jòṅtì j-á  
 -û  
 1-child 1-first 1-the 9-goat 9-second 9-the  
 “The first child (born).” “The next goat.”

c. *m̀b́índzàrì j̀ín/lwì`índzìmjá*  
 m̀- b́índzàrì j̀ín- j-á  
 lwì`índzìm  
 9-sheep 9-last 9-the  
 “The last sheep.”

Although the word for ‘next’ is pragmatically conceived of as referring to ‘the second’, its function extends to all following members in a series. Round about methods involving the use of a cardinal number are used alongside ‘next’ to specify the ‘third’, ‘fourth’, etc. member in a series. We should also mention that the numerals can function as pronouns in the sense that they can substitute for a noun and thus bear the meaning ‘the first (one)’, ‘the next (one)’ and ‘the last (one)’. In this case, the numeral takes a prefix whose form is determined by the noun it replaces, e.g. *j̀íntfàmbì* “the first one (class 1 noun)”, *m̀íntfàmbì* “the first ones (class 6 noun)”, *f̀j̀jòṅtì* “the next/following one (class 19 noun)”.

#### 1.4. The noun and quantifiers

Bafut makes use of four quantifiers, namely *-tsìm* ‘all/every’, *-m̀ó’ó* ‘some/certain’, *-yà`àtì* ‘many/most’ and *-k̀è`ètì* ‘few’. These quantifiers subdivide into two classes based on the agreement morpheme which they take. The first class contains only *-tsìm* ‘all/every’ while the second class contains the others. While the agreement morpheme of the second class is identical to that employed by adjectives and numerals, the agreement morpheme of the first class is quite unique. Following is a table of the agreement morphemes that the quantifiers employ. The agreement morpheme is separated from the stem by a hyphen.

Table IV: Agreement morphemes of quantifiers

Noun class	- <i>tsìm</i> ‘all/ every’	<i>-m̀ó’ó</i> ‘some/ certain’	<i>-yà`àtì</i> ‘man y/most’	<i>-k̀è`ètì</i> ‘few’
1	<i>n-</i> <i>tsìm</i>	<i>j̀ì-m̀ó’ó</i>		
2	<i>b́í-tsìm</i>	<i>b́í-m̀ó’ó</i>	<i>b́í-yà`àtì</i>	<i>b́í-k̀è`ètì</i>
3	<i>ø-tsìm</i>	<i>j̀í-m̀ó’ó</i>		
5	<i>ní-tsìm</i>	<i>ní-m̀ó’ó</i>		
6	<i>m̀í-tsìm</i>	<i>m̀í-m̀ó’ó</i>	<i>m̀í-yà`àtì</i>	<i>m̀í-k̀è`ètì</i>

7	<i>ø-tsìm</i>	<i>jí-mó'ô</i>		
8	<i>ø-tsìm</i>	<i>dʒí-mó'ô</i>	<i>dʒì-ɣà'atì</i>	<i>dʒì-kə'atì</i>
9	<i>n-tsìm</i>	<i>jì-mò'ô</i>		
10	<i>ø-tsìm</i>	<i>dʒí-mó'ô</i>	<i>dʒì-ɣà'atì</i>	<i>dʒì-kə'atì</i>
19	<i>fì-tsìm</i>	<i>fí-mó'ô</i>		

When a quantifier alone is used with a noun, the noun phrase has a generic reference. Thus *mú ntsìm* and *mìngári mìa'atì* mean ‘every child’ and ‘many guns’ respectively. When used with a definite article, the position of the definite article varies and this variation in distribution corresponds to a difference in meaning. Consider the examples below.

- (27) a. *nàà dʒá dʒìɣà'atì dʒí tsó'ô kwímâŋkò'ò*  
*nàà dʒ-á dʒì-ɣà'atì dʒ-í tsó'ò kwímâŋkò'ò*  
 10-animals 10-the 10-many 10-SM vote 1-tortoise  
 “Many of the animals voted for tortoise.”
- b. *nàà dʒìɣà'atì dʒá dʒí tsó'ô kwímâŋkò'ò*  
*nàà dʒì-ɣà'atì dʒ-á dʒ-í tsó'ò kwímâŋkò'ò*  
 10-animals 10-many 10-the 10-SM vote 1-tortoise  
 “The (group of) many animals voted for tortoise.”

In the first example where the definite article follows the noun and precedes the quantifier, we are referring to the greater number of animals in a group and in the second example where the definite article follows the quantifier, we are dealing with many groups (potentially infinite number) one of which contains the largest number of animals. The animals in (27a) are therefore perceived as single entities whereas in (27b), they are perceived as a group.

Among the modifiers of the noun we have examined this far, the quantifier is the only one that exhibits this characteristic of occurring in phrase-final position when the definite article is present. We will see more of this distribution of the quantifier in phrase-final position when we examine the relative clause later in section 2.2.

## 2. The complex noun phrase

The complex noun phrase is one in which the modifier of the head noun is complex in the sense that it is larger than one-word units of the type discussed in the preceding sections. The modifiers that fall in this category are genitive phrases and the relative clause.

### 2.1. The genitives

The word ‘genitive’ is used as a cover term in this section to refer to the second noun in an *N of N* type construction or what is commonly known in Bantu grammar as the associative construction. When a genitive noun is used to modify a main noun in Bafut, the genitive is preceded by an associative morpheme which translates roughly into English as ‘of’. The associative morpheme (henceforth AM) is either a tone alone or a segmental morpheme of the shape (C)V and a tone. The shape/form of the AM is determined by the morphological class of the head noun (that is, the main noun that is modified). Following is a list the different associative morphemes (i.e. the AM) used to link the head noun to the genitive noun.

Table V: Associative morphemes in Bafut.

Noun	Associative
------	-------------

Class	morpheme
1	L
2	bí
3	ì
5	ní
6	mí
7	á
8	ì
9	L
10	ń
19	fí

The AM for classes 1 and 9 is a low floating tone. This tone in class 1 is gradually phasing out as its influence on neighboring tones is not as strongly felt as that of a normal surface L tone or that exercised by the H tone marker of the other noun classes. Classes 3, 7, 8 and 10 are marked by a vowel/nasal plus H tone. On the surface, the vowel/nasal segment is deleted leaving the tone which then grounds either to the left or right. Although it is hard to set any fixed rules regarding the direction to which these floating tones ground, the following general tendencies are observed: The floating low tone of class 1 grounds to the left (if it is not deleted), the low floating tone of class 9 grounds to either left or right while the floating high tone of the other classes grounds generally to the left. For a more detailed discussion of these tone grounding patterns, see Mfonyam (1989).

Genitive nouns in Bafut stand in different relations to the head noun. Some modify the head noun as possessors, some are frozen with the head noun into some sort of compound, others, which are derived from verbs, are arguments of the head noun and yet others are related to the head noun in ways that are difficult to describe. These different relations are discussed in the sections that follow.

#### A. *Genitives of possession*

One type of relation that holds between two members of a genitive construction is a possessive type of relation, where *possessive* must be understood in a very broad sense. This is the kind of relation expected to hold between the two members of the following:

- (28) a.            *lú'ú mfð*                      b.            *mìlù'ù mí mângjè*                      c.            *bìlú'ú bí mfð*  
                          | m-fð                                      mì m-í m-àngjè                                      b b-í m-fð  
                          ú'ú    -lù'ù    ì-lú'ú  
                          1-spoon 1-chief                                      6-palmwine 6-AM 1-woman                                      2-spoons 2-AM 1-chief  
                          “A chief’s spoon.”                                      “A woman’s palmwine.”                                      “A chief’s spoons.”

In these examples, the genitive noun can be interpreted in one of two ways: (a) as a pure possessor, i.e. the entity to which the first noun (N1) belongs. (b) as a qualificative, i.e. indicating a quality or other distinguishing mark by which a person or thing is characterized (genitive of description or quality). Thus, for instance, (28b) means ‘palm wine that belongs to a woman’ or ‘a type of palm wine that women generally like (palm wine that is not very alcoholic).’ What is however common between the two interpretations is that the genitive phrase answers the question ‘which’ and its meaning determines the reference of the entire associative construction.

Included in this group of genitives of possession is what we term ‘genitives of source/origin’ (following the Oxford English Dictionary) and ‘classifying genitives’. The genitive of source/origin indicates the person, thing or place from which N1 comes, is acquired or sought. It also expresses racial, local or native origin, descent, etc. or the notion of belonging to a place as deriving a title from it as its ruler. The classifying genitive on the other hand is adjectival in nature as it expresses a kind of quality. The examples in (29a-c) illustrate genitives of source/origin while (29d) illustrates a classifying genitive.

- (29) a. *m̀fò b̀if̀f̀*      b. *̀ǹù máṅkùù*      *f̀ibwè f̀í s̀òrìwàtá*
- b̀ì-f̀f̀f̀      ̀ǹù      máṅkùù      f    f-í      s̀òrìwàtá
- f̀ò                                    ì-bwè
- 1-chief    2-Bafut      1-person    Mankon      19-fish    19-AM    1-ocean/sea
- “Chief of Bafut.”      “A Mankon person .”      “Fish from the ocean.”
- d. *̀ǹd̀òṅ b̀ìl̀ì*
- ì b̀ì-l̀ì
- d̀òṅ
- 9-cup    2-witches
- “A drinking horn typical of witches.”

One common characteristic of genitives of source/origin and the genitives of possession in (28) is that the relation between the genitive noun and the head noun is not intrinsic in the sense that the choice of one noun does not depend on that of the other. The head noun and the genitive noun in both cases are like two distinct terms in a relation; two separate entities that are loosely related to each other. To demonstrate this distinctiveness, the possessor/source genitive noun can be pluralized independently of the head noun, can be post or pre-modified, and can be pronominalized. We illustrate this with pluralization in (30-31). The (a) examples show the head noun and the genitive noun in the singular form. In (b) and (c) one of the two is pluralized and in (d) both are pluralized.

(30) Possessives

- (a) *ǹìl̀òṅ ǹí nd̀îm yà*      (b) *ǹìl̀òṅ ǹí b̀ìl̀îm b̀à*
- n n-í    ò-d̀îm    y-à      n n-í    b̀ì-l̀îm    b-à
- ì-l̀òṅ                                    ì-l̀òṅ
- 5-radio    5-AM    1-brother    1-my      5-radio    5-AM    2-brothers    2-my
- “My brother’s radio.”      “My brothers’ radio.”
- c. *m̀ìl̀òṅ m̀í nd̀îm yà*      d. *m̀ìl̀òṅ m̀í b̀ìl̀îm b̀à*
- r m-í    ò-d̀îm    y-à      r m-í    b̀ì-l̀îm    b-à

ì-lòṅ

6-radios 6-AM 1-brother 1-my  
“my brother’s radios.”

ì-lòṅ

6-radios 6-AM 2-brothers 2-my  
“My brothers’ radios.”

(31) Source

<i>fìndzódó fí mǐjǎá</i>			<i>fìndzódó fí bímǐjàà</i>			<i>mú bìfò</i>	
fì	ǐ	r	fì	ǐ	bí	n	b
-ndzódó	-í	ǐjàà	-ndzódó	-í	-mǐjàà	-û	ì-fò
1		1	19		2-	1	2
9-frog	9-AM	-river	-frog	9-AM	rivers	-child	-chiefs
“A frog from a river.”			“A frog from rivers.”			“A chiefs’ child.”	

<i>mìndzódó mǐ mǐjǎá</i>			<i>mìndzódó mǐ bímǐjàà</i>		
mì		m	mì		bí-mǐjàà
-ndzódó	-í	ǐjàà	n-dzódó	-í	
6-		1	6-		2-rivers
frog	-AM	-river	frog	-AM	
“Frogs from the river.”			“Frogs from rivers.”		

In some instances, pragmatic facts render pluralizing the genitive noun rather odd. The examples in (31b) sound rather odd, this because our world view cannot conceive the idea of a single frog coming from many rivers. This however, does not imply that pluralizing the genitive noun is generally bad. Where our world view permits, this is quite acceptable as in (31c). In (31c), world view accepts a child as issuing from a union between two chiefs (one male, one female) and as such pluralizing the genitive noun is perfectly okay.

These examples in (30 – 31) show us that, although the head noun and the genitive noun are in a relation, they are, in a way, independent of each other. The genitive phrase is not intrinsically linked to the head noun in the same way that ‘of John’, for instance, is related to ‘father’ in ‘father of John’. The genitive phrase is simply an adjunct modifier which



serves to describe/specify the type of the head noun in the same way that adjectives would attribute a quality to the head noun.

When used with another genitive phrase in the same construction, the genitive of possession/source is always further away from the head noun than the other genitive phrase. The example in (32a) shows a genitive of source in the same construction with another type of genitive. In (32b) the two genitives have switched positions and the construction is ungrammatical. The genitive of source is not italicized.

- (32) a. *bìtā bí nìbà' à* bí jàmndè  
 bì-tà b-í nìbà' à b-í jàmndè  
 2father 2-AM Niba 2-AM Yaounde  
 “Niba’s fathers from Yaounde.”
- b. \* *bìtā* bí jàmndè *bí nìbà' à*  
 \* bì-tà b-í jàmndè b-í nìbà' à  
 2-fathers 2-AM Yaounde 2-AM Niba

It seems to be the case then that the genitive of possession/source is always further away from the head noun than any other genitive phrase.

### B. Compound genitives

This class of genitives includes genitive nouns which are intrinsically linked to the head noun, where ‘intrinsically’ linked means that they are treated along with the head noun as a unit; a compound. The constructions that constitute the class of compound genitives are presented below.

#### B.1. Genitives of purpose/place/time

As the name indicates, these genitives indicate the purpose for which the referent of the head noun is used as well as the time and/or place generally associated with its use. Some examples are:

- (33) a. Purpose of use      b. Place of use  
*àfù fìbà*                      *fìkùù fí ndánwì*  
 à fìbà                              f f-í      ò-dánwì  
 -fù                                      ì-kùù  
 7-                      1-fever                      19-bench    19-AM    9-church  
 medicine  
 “Fever medicine.”                      “A church bench.”
- c. Time of use  
*bìlábá' á bí mbèŋ*  
 bì-lábá' à      b-í      m-bèŋ  
 2- sandals      2- AM      9- rain  
 “Rain sandals.”

#### B.2 Genitives of substance

These indicate the material of which something is made or consists of or holds/contains as a kind of extension of sense.

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| (34) a. Material make-up | b. Content           |
| <i>ìkùú kxí</i>          | <i>ñtsîḡ ḡkxì</i>    |
| ì-kùù ì-kxì              | ñ-tsîḡ ḡ-kxì         |
| 3-bed 3-cane             | 9-bottle 1-water     |
| “A cane bed.”            | “A bottle of water.” |

In the interpretation of the foregoing examples of compound genitives, the genitive phrase serves to restrict the reference of the head noun. In contrast to the identificatory relation in genitives of possession/source, the genitive noun in this case specifies the kind of the reference of the head noun; it provides an answer to a question relating to ‘the kind of’. The semantic relation between the two nouns is such that the denotation of the construction as a whole is a subset of the denotation of the head noun alone.

Other forms included in this class are kinship terms and some body parts such as:

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| (35) a. Body parts | b. Kinship terms          |
| <i>ñtîí bô</i>     | <i>ñdzààntí tàâ</i>       |
| ñ-tîí à-bô         | ñ-dzààntî tàâ             |
| 1-heart 7-hand     | 1-sister 1-father         |
| “Palm of hand.”    | “Father’s sister (aunt).” |

A syntactic property that characterizes compound genitive constructions is that the genitive phrase is bound to the head noun. ‘Bound’ is used here in a morphological sense to mean that the genitive phrase is inseparable from the head noun. In the case of the genitives of possession and source/origin treated earlier, we observed a number of properties which indicated that the head noun and the genitive phrase are two separate entities loosely linked together. Thus, for instance, each of the nouns could be freely pluralized, pre- or post-modified or pronominalized. Compound genitives do not exhibit this freedom. In the compound genitive construction, the genitive noun cannot be treated as a separate entity from the head noun. The two nouns are treated compositionally such that the overall meaning of the construction is the combined meanings of the head noun and the genitive noun. Inflections such as the plural morpheme as well as any modifiers in the construction are associated with the head noun only. As the examples below show, only the head noun can be pluralized in the compound genitive construction.

- |                         |                        |                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| (36) a. <i>ìkùú kxí</i> | b. <i>mìkùù mí kxí</i> | c. <i>*ìkùù míkxí</i>   |
| ì-kùù                 ì | mì-kùù m-í    ì-kxì    | ì-kùù                 m |
|                         |                        | ì-kxì                   |
| 3-bed 3-cane            | 6-beds 6-AM 3-cane     | 3-bed 6-canes           |
| “A cane bed.”           | “cane beds.”           |                         |

Also, only the head noun, but not the genitive noun, can be pre or post-modified. In (37) ‘small’ can modify the head noun ‘bed’ but not the genitive noun ‘cane’. In (38) the determiner can only modify the head noun (witness the agreement on the determiner), but not the genitive noun.

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (37) a. <i>múntḡrî kùú kxí</i> | b. <i>*ìkùú múntḡrî kxì</i> |
| múntḡrî ì-kùù ì-kxì            | ì-kùú múntḡrî ì-kxì         |
| small 3-bed 3-cane             | 3-bed small 3-cane          |

“A small cane bed.”

- (38) a. *mìkùù mí kxí mjâ*  
 mì-kùù m-í ì-kxì mj-á  
 6-bed 6-AM 3-cane 6-the  
 “The cane beds.”
- b. \**mìkùù mí kxí wâ*  
 mì-kùù m-í ì-kxì w-á  
 6-bed 6-AM 3-cane 3-the

In the compound genitive phrase, the genitive noun forms a constituent with the head noun such that the singular morpheme in (37a) and the determiners in (38) are actually associated with the entire construction and not just the head. If they appear to be associated with the head noun, it is simply because it is the head of the entire construction and it is normally expected for inflections to be generally located on the head of a constituent. It is therefore reasonable to think that the genitive noun is frozen with the head noun into a single constituent; a compound.

### C. *Dependent genitives*

Dependent genitives comprise genitive nouns which stand in a close relation to the head noun akin to the one between the verb and its object. Dependent genitives are interpreted as denoting separate entities from what the head noun denotes. However, the relation between the two entities is not as loose as that between the head noun and the possessor genitives in the sense that, in their distribution, the dependent genitive is always in a position adjacent to the head noun. At the same time, the relation between the two is not as close as that between the head noun and a compound genitive. Unlike the compound genitive, the dependent genitive is not frozen with the head noun.

The most common type of dependent genitives are genitive nouns which mark inalienable possession. Some examples are given below.

- (39) a. *nìlí'í ní nìbà'â*  
 nì-lí'ì n-í nìbà'â  
 5-eye 5-AM Niba  
 “Niba’s eye.”
- b. *mìbè mí nìbà'â*  
 mì-bè m-í nìbà'â  
 6-liver 6-AM Niba  
 “Niba’s liver.”

Also included in this group are genitives which are interpreted as themes. In the examples below, ‘gorillas’ and ‘women’ are interpreted as themes, in the sense that the statue and the photograph represent gorillas and women respectively.

- (40) a. *fìḡkóbì fí bífú'ú*  
 fì-ḡkóbì f-í bì-bú'ú  
 19-statue 19-AM 2-gorillas  
 “A statue of gorillas.”
- b. *fútò b-àngjè*  
 fútò b-àngjè  
 1-photo 2-women  
 “A photograph of women.”

An outstanding characteristic of the dependent genitive is that, when it occurs in the same construction with a possessive genitive noun, it (i.e. the dependent genitive noun) is always in a position immediately adjacent to the head noun. Consider the examples below which contain a dependent genitive and a possessor genitive. The dependent genitive is in bold face.

- (41) a. *nìlí'í **ní** ɾ ní níkwábô*

***ɸbà'à***

nì-lí'ì n-í                      n n-í      nì-kwábè

***ìbà'à***

5-eye    5-AM    Niba      5-AM    5-fortune-telling  
“Niba’s fortune-telling eye (Niba’s eye used for fortune telling).”

- b. *ɸ̀ɸ̀kóbí ɸ̀ ɸ̀ɸ̀ɸ̀í m̀̀ɸ̀g̀jè*  
 ɸ̀-ɸ̀kóbì    ɸ̀-í                      ɸ̀ ɸ̀-í      m-àɸ̀g̀jè

***ì-fɸ̀***

19-statue    19-AM    2-chiefs    19-AM    1-woman  
“A woman’s statue of chiefs.”

In each of these examples, the two genitive nouns modify the head noun (witness the form of the genitive morpheme). The dependent genitive is immediately adjacent to the head noun. Were we to reverse the positions of the two genitive nouns, the meaning of the construction would change completely.

- (42) a. *ǹ̀lí'í ǹ̀ ǹ̀kwábé ǹ̀ ǹ̀bà'à*  
 ǹ̀-lí'ì    n-í                      n-í-      n-í      ǹ̀bà'à

***kwábè***

5-eye    5-AM    5-fortune-telling    5-AM    Niba  
“Niba’s fortune-telling eye (an eye, not Niba’s, which Niba uses for fortune telling).”

- b. *ɸ̀ɸ̀kóbí ɸ̀ m̀̀ɸ̀g̀jè ɸ̀ ɸ̀ɸ̀*  
 ɸ̀-ɸ̀kóbì    ɸ̀-í                      m    ɸ̀-í      ɸ̀-ɸ̀

***-àɸ̀g̀jè***

19-statue    19-AM    1-woman    19-AM    2-chiefs  
“A chief’s statue of a woman.”

The example in (41a), with ‘Niba’ adjacent to the head noun, refers to Niba’s own eye (as part of his body). In its counterpart in (42a) where ‘Niba’ is not adjacent to the head noun, we are no longer referring to Niba’s eye. Rather, we are referring to an object which has the shape of an eye and which Niba uses for fortune-telling. Similarly, in (41b), where ‘of chiefs’ is adjacent to the head noun, the statue represents chiefs but in (42b), where ‘of chiefs’ is further away, the statue represents a woman. We observe therefore that the dependent genitive is always adjacent to the head noun while the possessor genitive could be further away.

As a final observation before we leave the discussion of genitives, it is worth noting that when a determiner is used in these constructions, it can either occur immediately after the head noun or at the end of the entire noun phrase (i.e. after the genitive noun). When the determiner occurs after the head noun, it agrees with it (the head noun) and the construction is an appositive type construction in which the genitive noun serves to specify the reference of the head noun. In this case, there is an audible phonetic break after the definite article and

the genitive noun is preceded by a pronominal element which translates roughly into English as ‘the one of’.

- (43) *básíkò wá, jì ñkàà*  
 básíkò w-á, j-ì ñ-kàà  
 1-bicycle 1-the 1-pron 9-monkey  
 “The bicycle, the one of a monkey.”

On the other hand, when the determiner occurs at the end of the entire phrase, it can agree with either the head noun or the genitive noun.

- (44) a. *mìwúrí mí ñkáá mjá*      b. *mìwúrí mí ñkáá já*  
 mì-wúrî m-í ñ-kàà mj-á      mì-wúrî m-í ñ-kàà j-á  
 6-oil      6-AM 9-monkey 6-the      6-oil      6-AM 9-monkey 9-the  
 “The monkey-oil (a brand of oil)”      “The oil of the monkey (the monkey’s oil).”

Native speakers are generally not very conscious of the subtle difference in meaning when the definite article in final position agrees with either the head noun or the genitive noun. As such, both examples above are commonly used to express the possessive meaning ‘the monkey’s oil’. This difference in meaning however becomes clear to the native speaker when a possessive pronoun is used in place of the definite article.

- (45) a. *mìwúrí mí ñkáá mâ*      b. *mìwúrí mí ñkáá já*  
 mì-wúrî m-í ñ-kàà m-à      mì-wúrî m-í ñ-kàà j-à  
 6-oil      6-AM 9-monkey 6-my      6-oil      6-AM 9-monkey 9-my  
 “My monkey-oil”      “My monkey’s oil.”

In the example in (a) *mìwúrí mí ñkáá* is a kind/brand of oil generally associated with monkeys (monkeys like this kind of oil, the oil is named after monkeys, etc.). In the example in (b) on the other hand, we are referring to ordinary oil which belongs to my monkey.

## 2.2. The relative clause

The relative clause in Bafut functions to complement an antecedent noun by describing or delimiting its potential domain of reference. The relative clause is postnominal (in the sense that it occurs to the right of the relativised noun phrase) and the form of the verb and tense, aspect markers within S (the subordinate sentence) is not different from the form we find in ordinary declarative sentences.

The relative clause is introduced by either (a) a relative clause marker *mɔ́*, (b) a relative pronoun *-î*, or (c) a combination of the relative pronoun and the relative clause marker. The relative clause marker is used elsewhere as a complementiser which generally serves to introduce a great variety of subordinate clauses. It is used with verbs of saying and thinking and is thus a regular complementiser and not a pronominal element of any sort. In particular, it never functions alone as a noun or pronoun, does not mark gender and number and does not code an NP for case.

The relative pronoun is derived from the far from speaker/listener (FSL) demonstrative pronoun. In fact, apart from tone differences and the concord consonant of classes 1 and 3 nouns, the forms of the relative pronouns and the FSL demonstrative

pronouns are identical. Following is a table showing the relative pronouns and FSL demonstrative pronouns and their respective concord consonants.

Table VI: Concord consonants of relative pronouns and FSL demonstratives

Noun class	CC	Rel. Pron.	CC	FSL Dem.
1	j	<i>jî</i>	w	<i>wî</i>
	-		-	
2	b-	<i>bî</i>	b	<i>bî</i>
			-	
3	j-	<i>jî</i>	w	<i>wî</i>
			-	
5	n-	<i>nî</i>	n	<i>nî</i>
			-	
6	m-	<i>mî</i>	n	<i>mî</i>
			-	
7	j-	<i>jî</i>	j	<i>jî</i>
			-	
8	d <sub>3</sub> -	<i>d<sub>3</sub>î</i>	d	<i>d<sub>3</sub>î</i>
			3-	
9	j-	<i>jî</i>	j	<i>jî</i>
			-	
10	d <sub>3</sub> -	<i>d<sub>3</sub>î</i>	d	<i>d<sub>3</sub>î</i>
			3-	
19	f-	<i>fî</i>	f	<i>fî</i>
			-	

The relative clause marker *mɔ* is used to introduce a relative clause which serves to identify or describe a referent. In such relative clauses, the antecedent noun is usually definite and the constituent sentence (i.e. the sentence that undergoes relativisation) is closed by an anaphoric

definitiviser *láá* (contractable to simply *á*) which serves to convey or reinforce the specificity of the antecedent noun. In the very rare instances where the antecedent noun is indefinite or generic, the relative clause serves as a comment introducing an embedded sentence expressing an unexpected action. In this context, the anaphoric definitiviser is not used, understandably because the antecedent noun is not definite. The following examples illustrate the use of the relative clause marker *mó*. The example in (a) contains a definite noun and thus the anaphoric definitiviser *láá* while the (b) counterpart contains an indefinite noun and thus lacks the definitiviser.

- (46) a. *ɲù wá mó kî jô ɲkwú wá láá kwòmô.*  
 ɲ-ù w-á mó à kî jô ɲ-kwû w-á láá à kwòmô  
 1-person 1-the COMP SM P2 see 1-ghost 1-the DEF he die-COMPL  
 “The man who saw the ghost has died.”

- b. *ɲbí mó kî kwùrô nsáɲ yà, ò fí'í mmà'atî!*  
 ɲ-bî mó dʒ-ì kî kwùrô ànsáɲ y-à, ò fí'í m-mà'atî  
 10-goats COMP 10-SM P2 eat 1-corn 1-my you remove N-let go  
 “Goats which ate my corn, you (dare) set them free!”

While *mó* introduces a relative clause which serves to identify or describe a referent, the relative pronoun *-î* introduces a relative clause which particularises (singles out) a noun from a designated group. Such relative clauses often translate into English like appositives. The relative pronoun can optionally combine with the relative clause marker in such contexts especially when emphasis on the antecedent noun is intended.

- (47) a. *ɲgàɲàfâ'à jîí (mó) bóríkô láá ká wá'á ní ɲkábí tsî*  
 ɲgàɲàfâ'à y-îí (mó) á bóríkô láá à ká wá'á ní ɲ-kábî tsî  
 1-worker 1-who COMP SM lazy DEF he F2 Neg with 9-money be  
 “A worker, (the one) who is lazy will not receive money.”

- b. *bə bjá bîí (mó) mfɔ tsò'ó (wáá) láá mbó bó jó'ô*  
 bə bj-á b-îí mó ɲ-fɔ à tsó'ô (wáá) láá mbó bó jó'ô  
 2-people 2-the 2-whom COMP 1-chief SM choose them DEF Cond. they marry  
 “The people, (the ones) whom the chief has selected can marry.”

In the first example, although the antecedent noun is not definite, the relative clause is closed by the definitiviser *láá*. This is because, the relative pronoun, like other pronouns in Bafut (e.g. the demonstrative, possessive, etc.) has a definitising effect on the noun.

In the second example, the relativised noun which originates from object position leaves behind an optional resumptive pronoun. Compare this with preceding examples in which the relativised noun comes from subject position. Conditions at the extraction site in the relative clause and in the dependent sentence generally differ depending on whether the relativised position is subject, object or oblique. These conditions are examined in the subsections that follow.

### A. Subject relatives

When the subject is relativised, it leaves behind a subject marker at the extraction site. If the relativised subject is a pronoun, it occurs in the oblique case form while the subject form of the pronoun (i.e. the nominative case form) remains at the extraction site. We repeat the pronominal forms discussed earlier in chapter 3 for convenience. Examples of subject relativisation then follow the table of pronouns.

Table VII: Personal pronouns

Subject	Object	Oblique	Gloss
<i>m̄</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>m̄</i>	'I/me'
<i>ò</i>	<i>yô</i>	<i>wò</i>	'you'
<i>à</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jú</i>	'he-she/him-her'
<i>bì'ì</i>	<i>jí'í</i>	<i>bì'ì</i>	'we/us'
<i>bù/nì</i>	<i>yúú</i>	<i>bù</i>	'you'
<i>bó</i>	<i>wáá</i>	<i>bó</i>	'they/them'

(48) a. *màṅgjà jìí lígí sígìnì láá ká lò.*

m-àṅgjà j-ìì m̄ á lígò sígìnì láá à ká lòò  
 1-woman 1-who COMP SM cultivate well DEF she F2 leave  
 s

“Any woman who cultivates (farm) well will leave.”

b. *mú wá m̄ tàá jì kì kwó láá à zì-m̄.*

m-ú w-á m̄ tàá y-ì à kì kwó láá à zì-m̄  
 1-child 1-the COMP father his SM P2 die DEF he come+COMPL  
 “The child whose father died has come.”

c. *wò jìí m̄ ó jàrí mbí láá ò ká yèé bàṅṅfê.*

wò j-ìì m̄ jàrí m-bí láá ò ká yèé á bàṅṅfê  
 you who COMP SM steal goats DEF you F2 go to hell  
 “You who steals goats will go to hell.”

d. *jú jìí m̄ nṅṅ ní bàṅgjà láá ká bàṅṅí yèé búrí.*

jú j-ìì á nṅṅ ní b-àṅgjà láá à ká bàṅṅí yèé á búrí

ó

he who COMP SM sleep with 2-women DEF he F2 rather go to heaven  
 “He who sleeps with women will rather go to heaven.”

These four examples illustrate subject relativisation. In the first sentence, a full noun is relativised and in the (b) counterpart, a genitive/associative noun (which is part of the subject noun phrase) is relativised. In the latter case, the associative morpheme is truncated and the relativised genitive/associative noun leaves a corresponding possessive pronoun at the extraction site. The examples in (c) and (d) illustrate relativisation of pronouns. The form of the antecedent pronoun in these cases is the form normally used as objects of prepositions



(oblique case form) while the form that remains in the grammatical subject position is the normal subject pronoun (nominative case form).

### B. Object relatives

Relativised objects generally do not leave behind a resumptive pronoun. However, if the object is human, a resumptive pronoun can optionally be left behind. This affects both full nouns and pronouns. The relativised pronoun is always in the oblique case form while the resumptive pronoun is in the objective case form. The first example below illustrates relativisation of an ordinary non-human object noun phrase while the second example shows relativisation of a human object noun. In the last two examples, we illustrate relativisation of object pronouns.

(49) a. *ñsòdò jìí mǎ bì lé n-líggâ láá í bǒŋâ.*

ñ-sòdò j-ìí mǎ bì à lé n-líggâ láá í bǒŋâ  
 3-farm 3-which COMP Bih SM P3 N-cultivate DEF it nice  
 “A farm, the one which Bih cultivated is nice.”

b. *ŋù wá mǎ ŋkwú kî fêé (jí) láá, nî ká kwétâ (jí).*

ŋ-ù w-á mǎ ŋ-kwú à kî fêé (jí) láá nî ká kwétâ (jí)  
 1-Person 1-the COMP 1-ghost SM P2 slap (him) DEF you F0 help (him)  
 “You will help the man who was slapped by a ghost.”

c. *wò mǎ nó kî lòó (yó) láá ò ká yèé tsâŋ.*

wò mǎ nó kî lòó (yó) láá ò ká yèé á à-tsâŋ  
 you COMP 9-snake P2 bite (you) DEF they F0 go to 7-prison  
 “You who was bitten by a snake, (you) will go to prison.”

d. *jú wá mǎ bì kî twǒŋ (jí) láá ká tsí ní ndzì.*

jú wá mǎ bì kî twǒŋê (jí) láá à ká tsí nî ñdzì  
 s/he the COMP Bih SM P2 call (him/her) DEF s/he F0 stay with hunger  
 “He/she whom Bih invited will go hungry.”

### C. Oblique relatives

When a noun phrase which is object of a preposition is relativised, it leaves behind a resumptive pronoun *yú*. Elsewhere, *yú* is used as a locative pronoun meaning ‘there’. In the relative construction, the distribution of *yú* depends on the type of preposition used. The ordinary prepositions *á* ‘to/in/at/on/from’ and *ní* ‘with’ are omitted and the resumptive

pronoun *γύ* immediately follows the verb or the object (of verb) noun phrase. On the other hand, if the preposition is a complex unit made up of *á* and a body part, (e.g. *á àtú* ‘on’) the body part is maintained and the resumptive pronoun immediately precedes it. Consider the following examples in which the prepositions used are *á* ‘to’ and *á mbèè* ‘beside/near’.

*àdzòη já lé ηγèè lá’à.*

50) a.

à	:	à
-dzòη	-á	-lá’à
7	M 3	7
-giant	-the	-village

“The giant went to the village.”

*àlá’á já jìí m̂ dzòη já lé ηγèè γύ láá...*

b.

à	j	à	N
-lá’á	-á	-dzòη	-á
7	7	7	N
-village	-the	-giant	-the

“The village, the one which the giant went to....”

*àtìrì já k̂ tìηní mbí já mbèé tákwúró wá.*

51) a.

à	ì	b̂	-á	-bèè	ákwúrî	-á
-tìrì	-á	-bî	-á	-bèè	ákwúrî	-á
7	M 2	7	7	7	7	7
-fool	-the	-goat	-the	-side	-leopard	-the

“The fool tethered the goat near the leopard.”

*tákwúrǒ wá mǒ tìrì já kì tìṅní mbí já yú mbèè láá...*

b.

	tá																			
kwúrî	-á	ó	-tîrì	-á	ì	ìṅnô	bí	-á	ú	-bèè	áá	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
1-																				
leopard	-the	OMP	-fool	-the	M	2	ether	-goat	-the	ron	ide	EF	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

“The tiger beside which the fool tethered the goat....”

In the example in (50b), the preposition *á* ‘to’ is omitted and the pronoun *yú* surfaces in its place. In (51b), the second element of the complex preposition *mbèè* is maintained and the pronoun *yú* immediately precedes it.

*D. Other relatives*

The relativised noun phrases presented so far originate from canonical subject, object and oblique positions and constitute single nouns. Relativisation can also target other positions of a construction as well as complex phrases including co-ordinate noun phrases, associative constructions and dative complements. We briefly present the characteristics of relativisation from such positions below.

i. Co-ordinate noun phrases

In a construction in which the subject or object is a co-ordinate noun phrase, each of the members of the co-ordinate structure or the entire structure can be relativised. Consider



*nààkò jìí mós bó nsós kî tó mflù'ù láá à fê?*

d.

	nà				h			m		f
àkò	-îî	ó	ó	-sóè	-í	ì	ó	ì-lù'ù	áá	è
	1-				9			6		w
Bush pig	-who	OMP	nd	Elephant	-SM	2	ap	-pwine	EF	e here

“Where is (the) Bush pig with whom Elephant tapped palmwine?”

As we notice from these examples, relativising the entire co-ordinate structure or single members of the structure does not pose a problem. The situation changes when dealing with an associative noun phrase; another complex construction containing two nouns.

ii. Associative noun phrases

In the associative construction, either the entire phrase or the modifying (genitive) noun alone can be relativised. Relativising the head noun alone is unacceptable. When the modifying (genitive) noun is extracted from the associative noun phrase, it obligatorily leaves behind a resumptive pronoun. Consider the examples below.

(53) a. *bì lé mbógí níká'á nò tétì njá.*

bì lé m-bógô ñi-kà'à n-í à-tétì nj-á

Bih SM P3 N-break 5-leg 5-AM 7-table 5-the  
 “Bih broke the leg of the table.”

b. *ñikà'à nò tétì njá mós bì lé mbógí láá....*

ñi-kà'à n-í à-tétì nj-á mós bì lé N-bógô láá

5-leg 5-AM 7-table 5-the COMP Bih SM P3 N-break DEF  
 “The leg of the table which Bih broke....”

*àtétì já mós bì lé mbógí níká'á ní láá....*

						N	n	láá...
-tétì	-á	ó	ì	é	-bógô	ì-kà'à	-í	.
						N	5	DEF
-table	-the	OMP	ih	M	3	-break	-leg	-its

“The table whose leg Bih broke...”

	*					N		ì	
	nìkà'à	j-á	é	ì	é	-bógô	-í	-tétì	áá....
						N		ì	ì
	5- leg	-the	OMP	ih	M 3	-break	-its	-table	EF

The example in (b) shows relativisation of the entire associative noun phrase. Since this is relativised from object position, it leaves behind no resumptive pronoun. In the third example, the possessor noun (the modifying genitive noun) is relativised and it leaves behind a resumptive pronoun which agrees with the head of the associative phrase in number and class. The last example shows the impossibility of relativising the head of the associative phrase.

### iii. Dative complements

In the dative construction, the verb is immediately followed by a recipient/benefactive noun phrase while the patient/theme noun phrase follows a preposition which itself comes immediately after the recipient/benefactive noun phrase. Relativising either of these noun phrases is possible. The relativised noun leaves behind a resumptive pronoun. The pronoun left behind by the recipient/benefactive is the ordinary object (of verb) personal pronoun (see table VII above) and it is optional. On the other hand, the theme/patient leaves behind an obligatory third person oblique pronoun *jú*.

- (54) a. *m̀b̀d̀l̀s̀'̀s̀ d̀z̀á l̀é ǹd̀ás̀í b̀à̀ng̀j̀è b̀j̀á ǹì ñ̀k̀áb̀ê*  
*m̀b̀d̀l̀s̀'̀s̀ d̀z̀-á d̀z̀-í l̀é N- b̀-à̀ng̀j̀è b̀j̀-á ǹì ñ̀- k̀áb̀ê*  
*d̀ás̀ê*  
 10-Bororoës 10-the 10-SM P3 N-give present 2-women 2-the DAT 9-money  
 “The Bororoës gave money to the women as presents.”

*b̀à̀ng̀j̀è b̀j̀á m̀ó m̀b̀d̀l̀s̀'̀s̀ l̀é ǹd̀ás̀ó (ẁáá) ǹí ñ̀k̀áb̀í l̀áá....*

	b			m̀		N			ř		
	-àṅgjà	j-á	é	b̀̀l̀́s'̀́	̀́-í	é	-dásô	wáá)	í	kábô	áá
	2			10			N			n	
	-women	-the	OMP	Bororoos	OSM	3	-give p.	them)	AT	oney	EF

“The women to whom the Bororoos gave money as presents....”

*ṅkábí já m̀́ mb̀̀l̀́s'̀́ lé ndásó b̀̀ṅgjà bjá nì jù láá....*

	ṅ			m̀		N	b			l	
	-kábô	-á	é	b̀̀l̀́s'̀́	é	-dásô	-àṅgjà	j-á	ì	ù	áá
	9			B		N	2			D	
	-money	-the	OMP	ororoos	3	-give p.	-women	-the	AT	ron	EF

“The money which the Bororoos gave the women as presents....”

- d. \* *b̀̀ṅgjà bjá ní ṅkábí m̀́ mb̀̀l̀́s'̀́ lé ndásí láá*  
 women the DAT money that Bororoos P3 give p DEF

As the ungrammatical (d) shows, relativising both post verb arguments in the dative construction is not possible.

## Conclusion

In the discussion in this chapter, we categorized the noun phrase into simple and complex noun phrases; the simple noun phrase being a noun or pronominal element only or a noun modified by a single modifier and the complex noun phrase being a noun modified by a complex unit such as a genitive phrase or a relative clause. This was however just for ease of exposition. The characteristics of the simple noun phrase, as has been evident from the discussion, generally carry over to the complex noun phrase. In a related study of the internal constituency of the noun phrase in a related Bantu language, it is advisable to consider this categorization of the noun phrase into simple and complex only as a measure to ease presentation.

## Chapter 7 Tense, aspect and mood

### Introduction

Tense, aspect and mood in Bafut are so intricately linked that separating one from the other in an analysis of the type envisaged in this chapter would invariably lead to inadequacies in the description. As such, they will be treated together.

The Bafut verb system employs two non-finite forms: *Infinitive* and *Imperative* and five moods: *Indicative*, *Subjunctive*, *Conditional*, *Simultaneity*, and *Potential*. These moods employ a variety of tense morphemes to mark past, present and future events/actions/states. Most of the tenses found in the positive conjugation are also attested in the corresponding negative conjugation.

### 1. The infinitive

There is no infinitive form of the verb per se in Bafut. What translates roughly into English as the infinitive is a derived verb form preceded by an optional particle *á* “to”. The derived verb is marked by a nasal consonant which is homorganic with the initial consonant of the verb root. In all cases, the infinitive verb looks like a noun of class 9 or a nominalised verb. Following are examples of infinitive verb forms.

- (1) a. *á mfà'â* “to work”  
b. *á mbìntê* “to set a trap”  
c. *á ntsó'ô* “to remove”  
d. *á ndásê* “to give a present”  
e. *á ñkòñê* “to love”  
f. *á ñyò'ô* “to grind”

The infinitive is generally used to mark *means-purpose* relations as in (2) or *truth-value* statements as in (3). In the absence of the infinitival particle *á*, the verb assumes the interpretation of a derived nominal as in (3b).

- (2) *à kî zǐ ñkótí mbí.*  
*à kî zǐ á N-kótê m-bí*  
he P2 come to N-catch 10-goats  
“He came in order to steal goats.”

- (3) a. *á ñkótí mbí nê nù jíbhí.*  
*á N-kótê m-bí à ní à-nù jí-bhí*  
to N-catch 10-goats it is 7-thing 7-bad  
“To steal goats is a bad thing.”

- b. *ñkòtí mbí nê nù jíbhí.*  
*ñ-kótê m-bí à ní à-nù jí-bhí*  
Nom-catching 10-goats it is 7-thing 7-bad  
“Stealing goats is a bad thing.”

### 2. The imperative



The imperative is represented by forms for the 2nd person singular and plural. The plural form is preceded by the simple subject human pronoun *n̄* and all syllables of the verb bear high tones which are, naturally, subject to the downdrift phenomenon. The singular form on the other hand is not preceded by any element and there is no significant change in the tone pattern of the verb. That is, the tone pattern of the verb in the singular form is usually identical to the tone pattern of the verb in isolation (except, of course, when some other tone follows the verb). In principle, all verbs can be used in the imperative although social norms and pragmatic factors may exclude such usage as for example from state verbs and from verbs denoting royal actions. The imperative is the most free form of the verb: it comprises the stem only without any morphemes attached and it does not occur with any tense specifications. Syntactically, the imperative is an interjective. Following are examples of imperatives (in isolation, the tone patterns of the verbs are the following: *b̄n̄n̄* “to get up” and *t̄f̄às̄* “to escort or to give way to someone”)

4. *b̄n̄n̄* “(you sg) get up!”      *t̄f̄às̄ yâ* “(you sg) let me pass”  
*n̄ b̄ín̄* “you (pl) get up!”      *n̄ t̄f̄ás̄ yâ* “you (pl) let me pass”

The present-future and future tenses of the subjunctive mood are often used imperatively for all persons. Thus: *tá m̄ ÿéé* “let me go!”, *tá b̄ò ló ñȳéé j̄óó* “let them go tomorrow!”, etc. The formative *tá* in these examples is not a verb in its own right. These tenses are treated more fully under the Subjunctive Mood.

The negative form of the imperative is formed by inserting a negative marker immediately preceding the verb. The negative imperative has emphatic forms which go up to three degrees of emphasis. The form of the negative marker, as well as the overall structure of the negative imperative may vary depending on the degree of emphasis:

(5)	Singular	Plural	Gloss	Degree Emph.
a.	<i>tsùû b̄n̄n̄</i>	<i>n̄ tsùû b̄n̄n̄</i>	“don’t get up!”	0
b.	<i>tsùû ló b̄n̄n̄</i>	<i>n̄ tsùû ló b̄n̄n̄</i>	“don’t get up!”	1
c.	<i>wá’á b̄n̄n̄</i>	<i>n̄ wá’á b̄n̄n̄</i>	“don’t get up!”	2
d.	<i>wá’á ló m-b̄ín̄</i>	<i>n̄ wá’á ló m-b̄ín̄</i>	“don’t dare get up!”	3
e.	<i>tá m̄ tsùû ȳèè</i>	<i>tá b̄ò tsùû ȳèè</i>	“let me/them not go!”	0
f.	<i>tá m̄ tsùû l̄ ȳèè</i>	<i>tá b̄ò tsùû l̄ ȳèè</i>	“let me/them not go!”	1
g.	<i>tâ wá’á ȳèè</i>	<i>tâ b̄ò wá’á ȳèè</i>	“tet him/them not go!”	2
h.	<i>tâ wá’á ló ñ-ȳéé</i>	<i>tâ b̄ò wá’á ló ñ-ȳéé</i>	“let him/them not dare go!”	3

The zero and first degree emphatic forms take the negative marker *tsùû* while the second and third degree emphatic forms take *wá’á*. The third degree emphatic form which provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the imperative verb form is similar to the near future tense marker. This form will be discussed in greater detail under the tenses of the Indicative Mood in the relevant sections.

### 3. The indicative mood

The indicative mood is used to state what was, is or will be, and covers a wide range of tenses. These tenses divide the time spectrum symmetrically into four past and four future

times with respect to present time or moment of speaking. Most of the tenses found in the positive conjugation are also attested in corresponding negative conjugations.

### 3.1. The present tenses, positive

The present tense in Bafut is marked solely by tone. It has three forms: the indefinite, the definite, and the perfective.

#### A. The indefinite

The indefinite present expresses the idea of habitual action. This form is only used with the psyche-verbs *love, hate, believe, fear, know, regret*. The indefinite present is marked by a replacive high tone which surfaces on the subject marker and then spreads rightward onto the verb. If the subject of the utterance is a pronoun, the replacive high tone surfaces directly on the verb and subsequent assimilation by the low tone of the pronoun changes the replacive high to a low tone. The verb “like/love” /kòŋê/ in the following examples has an underlying LH̄L tone pattern.

- |        |                                 |    |                         |
|--------|---------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| (6) a. | <i>àbù'ù kóŋó nwí</i>           | b. | <i>mə kòŋé nwí</i>      |
|        | à-bù'ù    à'        kòŋê    nwì |    | mə    kò'ŋê    nwì      |
|        | 7-slave    SM+T0    like    God |    | I        Like+T0    God |
|        | “A slave likes God.”            |    | “I like God”            |

The replacive high tone in (6a) grounds onto the subject marker and then spreads rightward onto the verb resulting in a high tone on the first syllable of the verb. In (6b) the replacive high surfaces on the verb and is eventually assimilated to the low features of the L on the subject pronoun.

#### B. The definite

The definite present has the idea of continuous action in present time. Unlike the indefinite present, the definite present is used with a wide range of verbs including verbs of action, psyche verbs and stative verbs. It is marked by a high tone which is realised on the subject pronoun or SM and which may spread rightward onto following words including the verb and even the object of the sentence. This high tone also has an aspectual (progressive) interpretation.

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| (7) a. | <i>mó bíí nù jíí mó yàá láá nlóŋmó ndzì jò kò'ótá láá.</i>   |
|        | mə'    bíí        à-nù    j-íí    mó    ó        yàá láá    nlóŋmó    ndzì    jò    kò'ótá    láá              |
|        | I+T0    believe    7-thing    7-which    that    you    talk    Def    because    voice    your    high    Def |
|        | “I am agreeing with you because your voice is raised.”   |

It should however be noted that the tonal adjustments are usually not as straightforward as I have tried to show in the examples in (6) and (7a). Other tonal processes usually intervene thus obscuring the effects of the replacive P0 tense as in the example in (7b) where the effects of the high T0 tone are simply invisible in the surface form.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| b. | <i>bìsíŋ bjá jè'è níwó ní mfɔ̀ wàà wá.</i>   |
|    | bìsíŋ    bj-â    b-í        jè'ê    nì-wô    n-í        ì-fɔ̀    w-àà    w-á             |
|    | 2-birds    2-the    2-SM+T0    cry        5-death    5-AM    1-chief    1-their    1-the |
|    | “The birds are mourning the death of their chief.”                                       |

### C. The perfective

This tense indicates a completed action in present time. It is translated into English by the present perfect tense. In Bafut, it is marked by a low tone either on the subject pronoun from where it spreads rightward onto the first syllable of the following verb or on the SM from where it docks onto the first syllable of the following verb when the SM is truncated. In the examples below, the verbs “drive, send away” and “climb” (/fúrê/, /kó’ô/) have an underlying HHL tone pattern.

- (8) a. *mè fùró bári já.*  
 mè` fúrê à-bárí j-á  
 I+T0 drive 7-mad man 7-the  
 “I have driven away the mad man.”
- b. *m̀bú já kò’ô tú ndá.*  
 m̀-bú j-á ì` kó’ô à-tú ñ-dá  
 9-dog 9-the SM+T0 climb 7-head 9-house  
 “The dog has climbed onto the roof.”

In the example in (8b), two low tones are involved. First there is the low tone perfective marker and then the SM is truncated leaving behind a second floating low tone. The low tone of the truncated SM docks leftwards onto the definite determiner *j-á* giving rise to *já* while the low perfective marker docks rightward onto the first syllable of the verb.

### 3.2. The present tenses, negative

Sentential negation in Bafut is marked by a discontinuous morpheme: an optional pre-subject particle *kàâ* and an obligatory post-subject particle which varies between *sì*, *búritì* and *wá’á* depending on tense (see Chumbow and Tamanji 1994 for a more detailed discussion on negation in Bafut). The Bafut present tenses use the post subject particle *sì* (or its phonetic variant *sə̀*).

#### A. The indefinite

- (9) a. *kàá mè sì bàngjè kòŋô.*  
 kàâ mè sì b-àngjè kòŋô  
 Neg I+T0 Neg 2-women like  
 “I do not like women.”
- b. *kàá mè sè nwí bì.*  
 kàâ mè sì nwí bì  
 Neg I+T0 Neg God believe  
 “I do not believe in God.”

#### B. The definite

- (10) a. *kàá mè sě nù jìí mó yàá jú’útó.*  
 kàâ mè sì à-nù j-ìí mó ó yàá jú’útó  
 Neg I+T0 Neg 7-thing 7-which that you talk listen  
 “I am not listening to what you are saying.”
- b. *kàá bìsíŋ bjá sí níwó ní mfɔ̀ wàà wá jè’è.*  
 kàâ bì-síŋ bj-á bí sí nì-wó n-í m-fɔ̀ w-àà w-á jè’è  
 Neg 2-birds 2-the SM+T0 Neg 5-death 5-AM 1-chief 1-thier 1-the cry  
 “The birds are not mourning the death of their chief.”

### C. The perfective

- (11) a. *kàá mà sǎ bàrǎ já fúrǎ.*  
 kàâ mà sǐ à-bàrǎ j-á fúrǎ  
 Neg I+T0 Neg 7-mad man 7-the drive  
 “I have not driven away the mad man.”
- b. *kàá mbú já sǎ tú ndá kǎ’ǎ.*  
 kàâ m̄-bû j-á ǐ sǐ à-tû H ñ-dâ kǎ’ǎ  
 Neg 9-dog 9-the SM+T0 Neg 7-head 7-AM 9-house climb  
 “The dog has not climbed up the roof-top.”

The phonetic variant *sǎ* often results from the coalescence of the two vowels *ǐ* and *ǎ*. As we notice in all examples in the negative, the verb gets moved to absolute sentence-final position. Other possible positions that the verb can occupy in the negative construction will emerge as the discussion progresses.

### 3.3. The past tenses

There are four past tenses in Bafut marking the immediate past, today past, yesterday past and remote past. Each of these forms is marked by a separate segmental morpheme and, variations in the form, determined by semantic factors and dialectal differences, are attested.

#### A. Immediate past

The immediate past (labelled P0) is used to denote events that have just taken place. Its meaning overlaps with that of the perfective present described immediately above in showing the completed nature of the event. However, whereas the immediate past focuses on the immediacy of the completed event, the perfective present focuses on the perfective nature or completive aspect of the action. In other words, the immediate past focuses on the nearness of the completed event to the moment of speaking with the result that the action is still “fresh” or felt. This corresponds, in a sense, to what McCawley (1971) termed the *Hot News Perfect*. On the other hand, the perfective present simply indicates that the action was completed without much regard to the result of the completed action vis-à-vis the moment of speaking. The immediate past tense is marked by two elements: (i) a LL replacive tone pattern which replaces the underlying tones of the verb stem or negative marker (if it is present), and (ii) a verb suffix *mǎ* which functions mainly to mark the completive aspect. In the following examples, the replacive LL tone pattern of the immediate past has replaced the underlying HHHĪ and HHĪ pattern of the verbs.

- (12) a. *kwímáŋkǎ’ǎ tsǎ’ǎtímǎ m̄ndǎŋ m̄f̄m̄f̄ǎ mjǎ.*  
 kwímáŋkǎ’ǎ à tsǎ’ǎtǎ-mǎ m̄-ndǎŋ m-í m̄-fǎŋ mj-á  
 Tortoise SM remove+P0 6-horns 6-AM 9-bull 6-the  
 “Tortoise has pulled off the horns of the bull.”
- b. *ñtwílǎà wá z̄wítímǎ m̄f̄ b̄s̄íŋ wá.*  
 ñ-twí àlǎà w-á à z̄wítǎ-mǎ m̄-fǎ L b̄-s̄íŋ w-á  
 1-blacksmith 1-the SM kill+P0 1-chief AM 2-birds 1-the  
 “The blacksmith has killed the chief of the birds.”

In the negative conjugation, the immediate past takes the negative marker *búrǎf̄f̄* which literally means “not yet”. The presence of this negative marker excludes the occurrence of the

verbal suffix *-mê* and the LL replacive tone of the immediate past. As usual, the negative marker pushes the verb to sentence-final position.

- (13) a. *kàá kwímáŋkè'ò búrítí míndòŋ m-í m-fòŋ mj-á tsó'ótê.*  
 kàá Kwímáŋkè'ò à búrítí m-ndòŋ m-í m-fòŋ mj-á tsó'ótê  
 Neg Tortoise SM Neg+P0 6-horns 6-AM 9-bull 6-the remove  
 "Tortoise has not yet pulled off the horns of the bull."
- b. *kàá ntwílàà wá búrítí mfò bìsíŋ wá zwítê.*  
 kàá ñ-twílàà w-á à búrítí m-fò L bì-síŋ w-á zwítê  
 Neg 1-blacksmith the SM Neg+P0 1-chief 1-AM 2-birds 1-the kill  
 "The blacksmith has not yet killed the chief of the birds."

The surface final low tone on the verbs in these examples is a consequence of the general intonation pattern in Bafut which tends to drop towards the end of the utterance (except of course in questions where the intonation rather rises). Also notice that, as pointed out above, the verbs surface without the aspectual element *-mê*. The absence of this morpheme is expected since the morpheme indicates that an event is completed, but negation, by its very nature, implies that the event has not taken place.

### B. Today past

The Today Past tense (P1) is used to designate actions that took place earlier in the same day, i.e. the day of speaking. It is morphologically marked by *lí* (or its dialectal variant *ñí*) which precedes the verb. This morpheme provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant prefix on the initial syllable of the following verb. This may suggest that the today past tense marker historically developed from a verb given that in a context where verbs occur in a series, the first verb in the sequence often occasions the occurrence of a homorganic nasal prefix on following verbs. By the way, some speakers use the verb *ɣìrê* "make/do" to mark the today past in Bafut. Following are examples of the use of the immediate past tense.

- (14) a. *à lí mbóó ndá ñi tí.*  
 à lí N-bóó ñ-dâ ñi ñ-tí  
 He P1 N-build 9-house with 8-sticks  
 "He built a house with wood (today)."
- b. *à lí ntú'ú ñkxì múm à-tóò.*  
 à lí N-tú'ú ñ-kxì múm à-tóò  
 He P1 N-fetch 1-water inside 7-calabash  
 "He fetched water in a calabash (today)."
- c. *à lí ñkáŋ mbà mbó tàâ.*  
 à lí N-káŋ ñ-bà á m-bó tàâ  
 He P1 N-fry 9-meat Prep 9-hands father  
 "He fried meat for father (today)."
- d. *à ɣìrê ntú'ú ñkxì múm à-tóò*  
 à ɣìrê N-tú'ú ñ-kxì múm à-tóò  
 He make/do N-fetch 1-water inside 7-calabash  
 "He fetched water in a calabash (today)."

The P1 tense marker has an alternative form which differs in the tone. Whereas the regular P1 form discussed immediately above bears a high tone, the alternative form *l̄* bears a falling tone. The alternative *l̄* is used to mark once-in-a-day actions/events. That is, actions which, once carried out, do not need to be repeated on the same day. Thus, if this form is used in (14b) for instance, it means that “he has already fetched water in a calabash (and there is no reason for him to do so again)”.

In the negative conjugation, the today past tense employs the post subject negative marker *wá’á* which has a dialectal/stylistic variant *kí’í*. The once-in-a-time P1 marker introduces a homorganic nasal consonant on the following negation marker. As in the case of the other tenses, the inclusion of the negative morpheme causes the verb to be realised in sentence-final position.

- (15) a. *kàâ l̄ wá’á mbà mbó tàâ káŋê*.  
 kàâ à lí wá’á ì-bà á m-bó tàâ káŋê  
 Neg he P1 Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands 1-father fry  
 “He did not fry meat for father (today).”
- b. *kàâ l̄ ñwá’á mbà mbó tàâ káŋê*.  
 kàâ à l̄ N-wá’á ì-bà á m-bó tàâ káŋê  
 Neg he P1 N-Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands 1-father fry  
 “He did not fry meat for father (Lit. he has not yet fried meat as he usually does).”
- c. *kàâ ÿìrí wá’á ñkxì múm à-tóò tú’ù*.  
 kàâ à ÿìrê wá’á ñkxì múm à-tóò tú’ù  
 Neg he make Neg 1-water inside 7-calabash fetch  
 “He did not fetch water in a calabash (today).”
- d. *kàâ ÿìrí kí’í ñkxì múm à-tóò tú’ù*.  
 kàâ à ÿìrê kí’í ñ-kxì múm à-tóò tú’ù  
 Neg he make Neg 1-water inside 7-calabash fetch  
 “He did not fetch water in a calabash (today).”

In the negative constructions, the tense morpheme provokes an initial homorganic nasal consonant on the following negative marker only if the tense morpheme marks *once-in-a while* events (cf. 15b). Where the tense morpheme marks a simple regular event which occurred earlier on the day of speaking, the homorganic nasal consonant does not appear.

Continuous action in the today past is marked by a high tone in the positive conjugation and by the morpheme *ká* in the negative conjugation. The high tone aspectual morpheme in the positive conjugation is realised on the subject of the sentence or on the SM while the segmental morpheme is generally inserted immediately before the verb.

- (16) a. *á l̄ ntú’ù ñkxì múm à-tóò*.  
 á l̄ n-tú’ù ñ-khì múm à-tóò  
 He+Asp P1 N-fetch 1-water inside 7-calabash  
 “He was fetching water in a calabash (earlier today).”
- b. *kàâ l̄ wá’á ñkxì ká ntú’ù múm à-tóò*.  
 kàâ à lí wá’á ñ-kxì ká n-tú’ù múm à-tóò  
 Neg he P1 Neg 1-water Asp N-fetch inside 7-calabash  
 “He was not fetching water in a calabash.”

c. *kàá lí wǎ'á ñkxì múm àtós ká ntú'ú.*

kàâ à lí wá'â ñ-kxì múm à-tós ká n-tú'ú  
 Neg he P1 Neg 1-water inside 7-calabash Asp N-fetch  
 “He was not fetching water in a calabash.”

With the inclusion of the aspectual marker in the negative conjugation, the verb has the option of occurring after the object (16b) or moving to sentence-final position (16c). In the later case, the verb moves along with the aspectual marker.

*C. Yesterday past*

The Yesterday past tense (labelled P2) is used to describe actions/events occurring or situations existing yesterday, last week, last month or last year. It is marked by the morpheme *kî* and the replacive tone pattern LH on both L and H tone verbs. In the examples below, the underlying tone pattern of the verb is provided in order to highlight the effect of the P1 replacive tone pattern.

(17) a.  $\widehat{HHL}$  tone pattern

*m̄f̄d̄ wá kî kwètô bù'ù jâ.*

m̄-f̄d̄ w-á à kî kwétô à-bù'ù j-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 help 7-slave 7-the  
 “The chief helped the slave.”

b.  $\widehat{HL}$  tone pattern

*m̄f̄d̄ wá kî kèé mìlù'ù mjâ.*

m̄-f̄d̄ w-á à kî kèè mì-lù'ù mj-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 filter 6-palm wine 6-the  
 “The chief filtered the palm wine.”

c.  $\widehat{LHL}$  tone pattern

*m̄f̄d̄ wá kî lîntô mú wâ.*

m̄-f̄d̄ w-á à kî lîntô m-û w-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 look after 1-child 1-the  
 “The chief looked after the child.”

The time adverbials *jǒǒ* “yesterday”, *ñgjà* “last week” and *fíí lòò* “last year” can be used in today past tense constructions to specify the time of the action/event/situation relative to the moment of speaking.

The today past tense also has an alternative form which marks events which do not need/have to be repeated. This alternative form bears a falling contour tone and its use occasions the insertion of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb. The use of this alternative form is illustrated in the (c) example repeated below.

c'. *m̄f̄d̄ wá kî nîntô mú wâ.*

m̄-f̄d̄ w-á à kî N-lîntô m-û w-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 N-look after 1-child 1-the

“The chief already took his turn in looking after the child (he does not need to do so again).”

In the negative conjugation, the yesterday past tense employs the post subject negative marker *wá'â* or its dialectal/stylistic variant *kí'f̄*. As in the case of the other tenses discussed above, the inclusion of the negative morpheme pushes the verb to sentence-final position as shown below.

- 18 a. *kàá mfɔ̃ wá kî wá'á mú wá lîntê.*  
 kàâ m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî wá'â m-û w-á lîntê  
 Neg 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Neg 1-child 1-the look after  
 "The chief did not look after the child."

- b. *kàá mfɔ̃ wá kî wá'á mú wá lîntê.*  
 kàâ m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî wá'â m-û w-á lîntê  
 Neg 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Neg 1-child 1-the look after  
 "The chief did not take his turn to look after the child."

Continuous actions and events in the yesterday past tense are marked by an aspectual marker *sí* positioned between the tense marker and the verb in positive conjugations and between the tense marker and the post subject negative morpheme in negative conjugations. In the positive conjugation, the high tone of the aspectual marker spreads rightward onto HH and HL tone verbs and may extend onto the first syllable of the object noun.

- (19) a.  $\widehat{\text{HHL}}$  tone pattern  
*m̄fɔ̃ wá kî sí kwétɔ̃ bù'ù jâ.*  
 m̄-fɔ̃ w-â á kî sí kwétê à-bù'ù j-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Asp help 7-slave 7-the  
 "The chief was helping the slave."
- b. HL tone pattern  
*m̄fɔ̃ wá kî sí kée mílù'ù mjâ.*  
 m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî sí kée m̄-lù'ù mj-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Asp filter 6-palm wine 6-the  
 "The chief was filtering the palm wine."
- c.  $\widehat{\text{LHL}}$  tone pattern  
*m̄fɔ̃ wá kî sí lîntɔ̃ mú wá.*  
 m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî sí lîntê m-û w-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Asp look after 1-child 1-the  
 "The chief was looking after the child."

- (20) a. *kàá mfɔ̃ wá kî sí wá'á mú wá lîntê.*  
 kàâ m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî sí wá'â m-û w-á lîntê  
 Neg 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Asp Neg 1-child 1-the look after  
 "The chief was not looking after the child."
- b. *kàá mfɔ̃ wá kî sí wá'á ní mú wá lîntê.*  
 kàâ m̄-fɔ̃ w-á à kî sí wá'â nɔ̃ m-û w-á lîntê  
 Neg 1-chief 1-the SM P2 Asp Neg Part. 1-child 1-the look after  
 "The chief was not looking after the child."

As the example in (20b) shows, the particle *ní* can be inserted after the negative morpheme. The role of *ní* in these contexts is not immediately clear.

#### D. Remote past

The remote past tense (P3) is used to describe events and actions that took place or situations that occurred in the distant past. It is marked by the morpheme *lé* which, like the today past



tense marker, provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb stem.

(21) *ɲù nìyáá wá lé nnó ndôɲ mìlù'ù tsí'í jù.*

ɲ-ù      nì-yáá    w-á    à      lé    N-nô    ñ-dôɲ    L    mì-lù'ù    tsí'í    jù  
 1-person   5-visit   1-the   SM   P3   N-drink   9-Calabash 9-AM   6-palm wine   only   him  
 “The visitor drank a calabash of palm wine alone (a long time ago).”

The remote past tense can also be employed to describe a state which was characteristic of a person or a society in the distant past and which no longer obtains at the moment of speaking.

(22) a. *ɲù bàɲ wá lé mbín ntŋá mbô.*

ɲ-ù      bàɲ    w-á    à      lé    N-bínó    N-tŋá    ñ-bô  
 1-person   red   1-the   SM   P3   N-dance   N-pass   10-hands  
 “The white man was an excellent dancer.”

b. *bìfíí lé njèrì ntŋá mbô.*

bì-fíí    bí    lé    N-jèrê    N-tŋá    ñ-bô  
 2-Bafut   SM   P3   N-steal   N-pass   10-hands  
 “The Bafuts of long ago used to steal a lot.”

Again, like the today and yesterday past tenses, the remote past tense has an alternative form *léé* whose presence occasions the insertion of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb. This alternative form is used to mark once-in-a-life time actions/events. That is, actions/events which, by their very nature, can only occur once in life (23a) or events/actions which constitute a feat and so are not likely to occur again in a person's life time (23b).

(23) a. *mú yù léé ntsóɲ ndèó jî.*

m-ú      y-ù      à      léé    N-tsòɲê    ñ-dèè    j-ì  
 1-child   1-this   SM   P3   N-circumcise   1-penis   1-his  
 “This child had had himself circumcised (so he is ripe for marriage).”

b. *àm-fò jîmbìì wá léé ñkó náâ ɲgwjè ní mbó ɲé'ê.*

àm-fò    jî-mbìì    w-á    à      léé    N-kô    ø-nààɲgwjè    ní    ñ-bô    ɲé'ê  
 1-chief   1-former   1-the   SM   P3   N-catch   1-leopard   with   10-hands empty  
 “The former chief had killed a leopard with bare hands (a long time ago).”

The remote past tense employs the post subject negative particle *wá'â* which, as usual, pushes the verb to sentence-final position (24a-b). Continuous action in this tense is marked by the aspectual marker *sí* positioned between the tense marker and the verb in positive conjugations and between tense marker and the post subject negative morpheme in negative conjugations (25a-b).

(24) a. *kàâ mfò wá lé wá'â ndôɲ mìlù'ù tsí'í jù nô.*

kàâ    ñ-fò    w-â    à      lé    wá'â    ñ-dôɲ    mì-lù'ù    tsí'í    jù    nô  
 Neg   1-chief   1-the   SM   P3   Neg   9-calabash   5-palm wine   only   hi   drink  
 m

“The chief did not drink a calabash of palm wine alone.”

b. *kàâ mú yù léé ɲwá'â ndèó jí tsòɲè.*

kàâ    m-ù      y-ù      à      léé    N-wá'â    ñ-dèè    j-ì    tsòɲè

Neg 1-child 1-this SM P3 N-Neg 9-penis 9-his circumcise  
 “This child has never had himself circumcised (so he cannot get married).”

- (25) a. *m̄f̄ ð j̄mb̄i w̄-á à lé sí n̄ ñ-d̄ŋ L m̄-l̄'ù tsí'ì j̄*  
 1-chief 1-former 1-the SM P3 As drink 9-calabash 9-AM 6-palm wine only him  
 p  
 “The former chief used to drink a calabash of palm wine alone.”

- b. *k̄á m̄f̄ ð w̄-á à lé sí w̄-á ñ-d̄ŋ L m̄-l̄'ù tsí'ì j̄ n̄*  
 Neg 1-chief 1-the SM P3 Asp Neg 9-calabash 9-AM 6-palm wine only him drink  
 “The chief did not use to drink a calabash of palm wine alone.”

With the introduction of the aspectual marker, the following verb (in the positive conjugation) or the post subject negative particle (in the negative conjugation) no longer bears the initial homorganic nasal consonant. The use of the homorganic nasal consonant is optional if the once-in-a-lifetime tense marker is used.

### 3.4. The future tenses

Future time in Bafut is divided into four parts marking events and actions that will occur or situations that will exist in the future. The future time units marked are: the simple future (F0), today future (F1) tomorrow future (F2) and remote future (F3). Each of these time units is morphologically differentiated from the other and each provokes a different type of reaction in positive and negative conjugations.

#### A. The Simple Future

The simple future is the unmarked future tense in the sense that it is used to describe future events/actions when the time is not specified. In this respect, it could also be referred to as the general future. The simple future is marked by the morpheme *ká* which is normally positioned between the subject and the verb if no adverbial element is present. If an adverbial is present, the tense marker immediately precedes it.

- (26) a. *b̄ŋj̄ ð bj̄-á k̄á líḡ ð m̄-ns̄ò*  
 2-women 2-the SM F0 cultivate 6-farms  
 “The women will cultivate the fields.”

- b. *ñ-gw̄iñ ð ðz̄-á ðz̄-í k̄á b̄ ð z̄*  
 10-locusts 10-the 10- F0 again come  
 SM  
 “The locusts will come again.”

Although the time of the event/action marked by F0 is unspecified, it is hardly used to describe events which have the potential of occurring in the very distant future. Thus, although we do not know when the locusts will return in (26b), the context leads one to expect them the following year or in a few years time and not say after a decade or a century.

In the negative conjugation, the simple future tense employs the same negative markers as the past tenses and the presence of the negative morpheme causes the same word order changes as noticed with the past tenses.

- (27) a. *kàá bàṅgjà bjá ká wá'á mînsòò lígê.*  
 kàâ b-àṅgjà bj-á b-í ká wá'á mî-nsòò lígê  
 Neg 2-women 2-the 2-SM F0 Neg 6-farms cultivate  
 "The women will not cultivate the fields."
- b. *kàá ṅgwììnì dǔá ká wá'á bù nǔí.*  
 kàâ ṅ-gwììnì dǔ-á dǔ-í ká wá'á bǔ n-ǔí  
 Neg 10-locusts 10-the SM F0 Neg again come  
 "The locusts will not come again."

The presence of the deficient verb *bǔ* in (27b) provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb.

### B Today future

The today future tense (F1) is marked by the simple future tense morpheme *ká* and another morpheme *lí* which specifies F1 occurrences. A stylistic/dialectal variant of this morpheme is *ǔrê* whose form is identical with that of the verb *ǔrê* "make/do". The today future tense is used to express actions and events that will take place or situations that will occur later on the same day, that is, the day of speaking.

- (28) a. *bàṅgjà bjá kálí lígê mînsòò.*  
 b-àṅgjà bj-á bí kálí lígê mî-nsòò  
 2-women 2-the SM F0+F1 cultivate 6-farms  
 "The women will cultivate the fields (later today)."
- b. *ṅgwììnì dǔá kálí bǔ ǔí.*  
 ṅ-gwììnì dǔ-á dǔ-í kálí bǔ ǔí  
 10-locusts 10-the 10-SM F0+F1 again come  
 "The locusts will come again (later today)."

Due to automatic lowering effects, the H on F1 *lí* is realised almost as a mid tone while the preceding H on *ká* remains almost as high as that on the preceding *dǔí*.

In the negative conjugation, the today future tense behaves exactly like the simple future in employing the same negative markers and causing the same word order changes (29a). Continuous action in this tense is marked by the morphemes *kí* in positive conjugations (29b) and *kà* in negative conjugations (29c-d).

- (29) a. *kàá bàṅgjà bjá kálí wá'á mînsòò lígê.*  
 kàâ b-àṅgjà bj-á b-í kálí wá'á mî-nsòò lígê  
 Neg 2-women 2-the 2-SM F0+F1 Neg 6-farms cultivate  
 "The women will not cultivate the fields (later today)."
- b. *bàṅgjà bjá kálí kí lígê mînsòò.*  
 b-àṅgjà bj-á b-í kálí kí lígê mî-nsòò  
 2-women 2-the 2-SM F0+F1 Asp cultivate 6-farms  
 "The women will be cultivating the fields (later today)."
- c. *kàá bàṅgjà bjá kálí wá'á mînsòò ká n-lígê.*  
 kàâ b-àṅgjà bj-á b-í kálí wá'á mî-nsòò ká N-lígê

Neg 2-women 2-the 2-SM F0+F1 Neg 6-farms Asp N-cultivate  
 “The women will not be cultivating the fields (later today).”

- d. *kàà bàṅgǵè bjá kálí wá’á kà n-lígê mînsòò.*  
 kàà b-àṅgǵè bj-á b-í kálí wá’á kà N-lígê mî-nsòò  
 Neg 2-women 2-the 2-SM F0+F1 Neg Neg N-cultivate 6-farms  
 “The women will not be cultivating the fields (later today).”

We notice that in the negative conjugation, with the inclusion of the aspectual marker, the verb has the option of remaining in situ or moving to sentence-final position. When the verb remains in situ, the aspectual marker *ká* bears a low tone. In daily speech, the option with the verb in sentence-final position is more frequent than the one with the verb in situ.

### C. Tomorrow future

The Tomorrow Future tense (F2) is marked by a combination of the simple future tense morpheme *ká* and the morpheme *lǒ* which specifies F2 events. Although the form of the today future marker is identical to that of verb *lǒ* “leave, go away”, there is no independent evidence that one is derived from the other. The tomorrow future tense is used to describe actions and events that are expected to take place or situations that will occur tomorrow, next week, next month or next year. The LH tone of the F2 morpheme is replaced by the H of the F0 morpheme and a subsequent downdrift effect is felt.

- (30) a. *nàà mîtsó’ó káló bósí bósó bjá.*  
 n-àà mî-tsó’ò dǵ-í kálǒ bósê b-óò bj-á  
 10- 9-wild 9-SM F0+F2 frighten 2-children 2-the  
 animals  
 “Wild animals will frighten the children (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”
- b. *bìsòrì bjá káló fí’í ntî jí.*  
 bì-sòrì bj-á b-í kálǒ fí’í ñ-tî j-ì  
 2-witches 2-the 2-SM F0+F2 remove 1-heart 1-his  
 “The witches will take out his/her heart (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”

The time adverbials: *jósó* “tomorrow”, *ṅǵjà* “next week”, *fí sáṅ* “next month” and *fí lòò* “next year” are employed, where necessary, to specify the expected time of the occurrence of the event, action or situation.

The behaviour of the tomorrow future tense in negative conjugations is identical to that of the today future tense in terms of the negative morphemes employed and effects on word order. Continuous action is also marked by *kí* in positive conjugations and by *ká* in negative conjugations.

- (31) a. *kàà n-àà mîtsó’ó káló wá’á bósó bjá bósò.*  
 kàà n-àà mî-tsó’ò dǵ-í kálǒ wá’á b-óò j-á bósê  
 Neg 10-animals 10-wild 10-SM F0+F2 Neg 2-children 2-the frighten  
 “Wild animals will not frighten the children (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”
- b. *nàà mîtsó’ó káló kí bósí bósó bjá.*  
 n-àà mî-tsó’ò dǵ-í kálǒ kí bósê b-óò bj-á

10-animals 10-wild 10-SM F0+F2 Asp frighten 2-children 2-the  
 “Wild animals will be frightening the children (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”

c. *kàà nàà mìtsó’ó káló wá’á bósó bjá ká mbósó.*

kàà n-àà mìtsó’ò dʒí káló wá’á b-óò bj-á ká N-bósó  
 Neg 10-animals wild SM F0+F2 Neg 2-children 10-the Asp N-frighten  
 “Wild animals will not be frightening the children (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”

d. *kàà nàà mìtsó’ó káló wá’á kà mbósí bósó bjá.*

kàà n-àà mì-tsó’ò dʒ-í káló wá’á kà N-bósó b-óò bj-á  
 Neg 10-animals 10-wild 10-SM F0+F2 Neg F0 N-frighten 2-children 2-the  
 “Wild animals will not be frightening the children (tomorrow, next week/month/year).”

#### D. The remote future

The simple future tense marker *ká* combines with the morpheme *jǐ* to mark the remote future (F3) in Bafut. This morpheme *jǐ* is probably derived from the verb *ʒí* ‘come’ whose dialectal variant is *jǐ*. The remote future tense is used to describe events and actions that are expected to take place or situations that are expected to occur some time in the distant future.

(32) a. *bósó kájǐ dhí’ítí bitàá bjáà*

b-óò b-í kájǐ dhí’ítí bì-tàâ bj-áá  
 2-children 2-SM F0+F3 advice 2-fathers 2-their  
 “Children shall advice their fathers (some years to come).”

a. *bàngjè kájǐ jós’ó mbáǵnè.*

b-àngjè b-í kájǐ jós’ó ñ-báǵnè  
 2-women 2-SM F0+F3 marry 9-men  
 “Women shall marry men (some years to come).”

With regard to negation, the behaviour of the remote future tense again parallels that of the other future tenses in terms of the negative morphemes employed and effects on word order. Continuous action is also marked in the same way by *kí* in positive conjugations and by *ká* in negative conjugations.

#### 4. The Conditional mood

The conditional mood in Bafut describes a *condition-consequence* relation in which one proposition results if another holds. The consequence clause generally follows the condition clause although some speakers may decide to place the consequence clause before the condition clause for stylistic effects. The conditional mood interacts with tense and negation in very interesting ways to mark open, hypothetical, counterfactual and concessive conditionals. Because the purpose of this section is simply to show the interaction between mood and tense, we will use only open conditionals for illustration reserving a more detailed discussion of the other types of conditionals for later. The conditional mood has three markers: (i) *mbó...bóŋ* “if...then”, (ii) *bó...bóŋ* “if...then” and (iii) *béé* “if”. The initial nasal in the form *mbó...bóŋ* “if...then” is not the same homorganic nasal which we find in verbs that occur in a series. The marker *bó* has an alternant *báá* which is derived from *bó* via insertion of a focus marker *á* and subsequent assimilation of *ó* to *á*. The marker *bó...bóŋ* is used in the indefinite present, past and future tenses, *mbó...bóŋ* is used in the present and future tenses while *béé* is used in the future tenses only.

### A. The indefinite present

The indefinite present tense employs the conditional markers *mbə...bóŋ* and *bə...bóŋ* to describe an “if...also” relation in which if the proposition in the antecedent clause (the condition clause) holds then that in the second clause (the consequence clause) also holds. The two markers have different distributions but the meaning is the same. In both uses, *bóŋ* introduces the consequence clause but *mbə* precedes the subject while *bə* follows the tense marker or the subject (marker) if tense is marked by tone.

- (33) a. *mə bə kəŋ bəŋgje bóŋ ò kí ŋkəŋə.*  
 mə bə kəŋə b-əŋgje bóŋ ò kí N-kəŋə  
 I if like 2-women then you also N-like  
 “If I like women, then you also do.”
- b. *mbə mə kəŋ bəŋgje bóŋ ò kí ŋkəŋə.*  
 mbə mə kəŋə b-əŋgje bóŋ ò kí N-kəŋə  
 if I like 2-women then you also N-like  
 “If I like women, then you also do.”

Notice that the presence of the particle *kí* “also” provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb, an indication that this particle could have derived from a verb or that it belongs to the category of verbs (i.e. it is a verbal element).

In the negative conjugation, two negative markers *sì* and *túú* or its variant *tsúú* are used in the consequence and antecedent clauses respectively. The presence of both negative markers pushes the verb to sentence-final position although this is not obvious in the consequence clause since the object is usually omitted. The sentence-initial negative marker *kàá* can optionally be used only in the consequence clause. It is possible to negate both clauses or just one of them. We illustrate negation of both clauses.

- (34) a. *mə bə túú bəŋgje kəŋ bóŋ (kàá) ò sì kí ŋkəŋə.*  
 mə bə túú b-əŋgje kəŋə bóŋ (kàá) ò sì kí N-kəŋə  
 I if Neg 2-women like then Neg you Neg also N-like  
 “If I do not like women, then you do not also.”
- b. *mbə mə túú bəŋgje kəŋ bóŋ (kàá) ò sì kí ŋkəŋə.*  
 mbə mə túú b-əŋgje kəŋə bóŋ (kàá) ò sì kí N-kəŋə  
 If I Neg 2-women like then Neg you Neg also N-like  
 “If I do not like women, then you do not also.”

### B. The Past tenses

The past tenses employ only the marker *bə...bóŋ* in both positive and negative conjugations. In both conjugations, *bə* follows the tense marker while *bóŋ*, as usual, introduces the consequence clause. We use the today past tense to illustrate.

- (35) a. *məfə à lí bə kéé mɪlù’ù mjá bóŋ ndòŋgárí wá yèé tsàŋ.*  
 məfə à lí bə kéé mɪlù’ù mjá bóŋ ndòŋgáre wá à yèé á àtsàŋ  
 chief SM P1 if filter palm wine the then messenger the SM go to prison

“If the chief had filtered the palm wine, the messenger would have gone to prison.”

- b. *m̄f̄ ò lí b̄ó túú m̄l̄l̄'ù m̄j̄á k̄éé b̄óŋ ñdòŋgárí wá ȳèé ts̄âŋ.*  
 m̄f̄ ò à lí b̄ó túú m̄l̄l̄'ù m̄j̄á k̄éé b̄óŋ ñdòŋgárè à ȳèé á àts̄ân  
 chief SM P1 if Neg palm wine the filter then messenger SM go to prison  
 “If the chief had not filtered the palm wine, a messenger would have gone to prison.”

Notice that in both conjugations, the P1 tense marker no longer provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb or negative marker due to the presence of the mood marker (compare these examples with those in (14) and (15) where P1 regularly provoked the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb or negative marker. This observation is also true of the P3 tense marker which, like P1, provokes a homorganic nasal on the following verb or negative marker.

### C. The future tenses

The future tenses employ all three conditional markers: *mb̄ó...b̄óŋ* “if...then”, *b̄ó...b̄óŋ* “if...then” and *b̄éé* “if”. The use of these conditional markers has interesting consequences on the form of the future tense marker. When *mb̄ó...b̄óŋ* and *b̄ó...b̄óŋ* are used, the general future tense marker *k̄á* is never used in the antecedent clause where only the specific markers *lí*, *l̄ó* and *j̄í* are allowed. On the other hand, *k̄á* is allowed in the consequence clause where *lí*, *l̄ó* and *j̄í* are only allowed when the proposition in the consequence clause is expected to take place later than the time specified in the antecedent clause. When the third conditional *b̄éé* is used in the antecedent clause, the consequence clause has no tense marking. We illustrate the use of these conditional markers with the F1 tense marker. It should however be noted that whatever is said of F1 is also true of F2 and F3.

- (36) a. *n̄ìb̄à'á b̄ó lí zh̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á ȳèé ñd̄ânw̄ì.*  
 n̄ìb̄à'á à b̄ó lí zh̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á ȳèé á ñ-d̄ânw̄ì  
 Niba SM if F1 come then you(pl) F0 go to 9-church  
 “If Niba comes, then you will go to church (on the same day).”
- b. *n̄ìb̄à'á b̄ó lí z̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á l̄ó ȳèé ñd̄ânw̄ì.*  
 n̄ìb̄à'á à b̄ó lí z̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á l̄ó ȳèé á ñ-d̄ânw̄ì  
 Niba SM if F1 come then you(pl) F2 go to 9-church  
 “If Niba comes, then you will go to church (the following day).”
- c. *mb̄ó n̄ìb̄à'á lí n̄z̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á ȳèé ñd̄ânw̄ì.*  
 mb̄ó n̄ìb̄à'á à lí n-z̄ì b̄óŋ n̄ì k̄á ȳèé á ñ-d̄ânw̄ì  
 If Niba SM F1 N-come then you(pl) F0 go to 9-church  
 “If Niba comes, then you will go to church (on the same day).”
- d. *b̄éé n̄ìb̄à'á lí n̄z̄ì n̄ì ȳèé ñd̄ânw̄ì.*  
 b̄éé n̄ìb̄à'á á lí n-z̄ì n̄ì ȳèé á ñ-d̄ânw̄ì  
 If Niba SM F1 N-come you(pl) go to 9-church  
 “If Niba comes, you go to church. (the same day)”

The example in (36a) illustrates the very general and common situation where *k̄á* is allowed in the consequence clause but not in the antecedent clause while (36b) shows that the use of the specific marker *l̄ó* in the consequence clause imposes the condition that the action in this clause can only take place later than the time in the antecedent clause. The sentences in (36c)

and (36d) illustrate the use of *mbó...bóŋ* and *béé* but more important, they introduce another interesting issue. In these examples, the verb takes a homorganic nasal consonant which is not present on the verbs in either (36a-b) or in any other construction where *mbó...bóŋ* has been used so far. This homorganic nasal consonant will shift to the negation marker if it is introduced as in (37b-c). It therefore seems to be the case that in these examples, the homorganic nasal is triggered by the markers *mbó* and *béé* but not *bó*.

- (37) a. *nìbà' à bó lí túú zì bóŋ nì ká yèé ndânwì*  
 nìbà' à à bó lí túú zì bóŋ nì ká yèé á ñ-dânwì  
 Niba SM if F1 Neg come then you F0 go to 9-church  
 "If Niba does not come, you will go to church."
- b. *mbó nìbà' à à lí n-túú zì bóŋ nì ká yèé ndânwì*  
 mbó nìbà' à à lí n-túú zì bóŋ nì ká yèé á ñ-dânwì  
 If Niba SM F1 N-Neg come then you F0 go to 9-church  
 "If Niba does not come, you will go to church."
- c. *béé nìbà' à lí n-túú zì nì yèé ndânwì.*  
 béé nìbà' à á lí n-túú zì nì yèé á ñ-dânwì  
 if Niba SM F1 N-Neg come you(pl) go to 9-church  
 "If Niba does not come, you go to church."

This situation might suggest that there are two forms of the future F2 marker in the language. While one of these forms is selected by the conditional markers *béé* and *mbó... bóŋ*, the other is used elsewhere.

## 5. The Subjunctive mood

The subjunctive mood is used with verbs of intending, desiring, liking, etc. in constructions which roughly correspond to the "final clause" construction in Latin. In this mood, only two tenses are generally recognised: the present and the future. Although the first is commonly called the "present", it has a future intent and for that reason, it is termed the "present-future". The Bafut subjunctive is marked by either *tá* or *bóŋ* positioned immediately before the subject. The use of the *tá* variant gives the utterance an imperative interpretation although the imperative force is not as strong as in ordinary imperatives. The use of *bóŋ* on the other hand has an advisory connotation; a subtle imperative which does not really come across as a command. The examples in (38) and (39) illustrate the use of *tá* and *bóŋ* respective. In each case, the (a) and (b) examples show the subjunctive (SUB) initiating the utterance in the present-future and future tenses while the (c) and (d) examples show the subjunctive in a subordinate clause.

- (38) a. *tá bō yèé mbōŋ ntōŋ yá lwí.*  
 tá bō yèé mbōŋ n-tōŋ y-à ì lwí  
 SUB they go before 1-neck 1-my SM bitter  
 "Let them go before I get angry."
- b. *tá bō ló ŋyèé jǒǒ nlóŋmó mbàŋ lóô.*  
 tá bō ló N-yèé á jǒǒ nlóŋmó m-bàŋ í lóô  
 SUB they F2 N-go Prep tomorrow because rain SM fall  
 "Let them go tomorrow because it is raining."



c. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mó tá bò yéé.*

ø-tàâ w-á à kî fwónê mó tâ bò yéé  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB they go  
 “The father said that they should go.”

d. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mó tá bò ló nyéé jǒð.*

ø-tàâ w-á à kî fwónê mó tá bò ló N-yéé á jǒð  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB they F2 N-go Prep tomorrow  
 “The father said that they should go tomorrow/the following day.”

(39) a. *bón bó yéé mbón ñ-tón y-à ì lwĩ.*

bón bó yéé mbón ñ-tón y-à ì lwĩ  
 SUB they go before 1-neck 1-my SM bitter  
 “It is advisable that they go away before I get angry.”

b. *bón bó ló nyéé jǒð nlónmá mbàŋ í lóð.*

bón bó ló N-yéé jǒð nlónmá mbàŋ í lóð  
 SUB they F2 N-go tomorrow because rain SM fall  
 “It is advisable that they go tomorrow because it is raining.”

c. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mó bón bó yéé.*

ø-tàâ w-á à kî fwónê mó bón bó yéé  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB them go  
 “The father advised that they should go.”

d. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mó bón bó ló nyéé jǒð.*

ø-tàâ w-á à kî fwónê mó bón bó ló N-yéé á jǒð  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB they F2 N-go Prep tomorrow  
 “The father advised that they should go tomorrow/the following day.”

Notice the presence of the homorganic nasal consonant on the verb following the F2 tense marker. Recall that this homorganic nasal never occurred in any regular future tense.

In the negative conjugation the *tá* subjunctive takes the negative marker *túú* positioned between the subject and the verb. The presubject negative particle *kàâ* is completely excluded from this construction. The *bón* subjunctive on the other hand takes both the optional presubject negative marker *kàâ* and the post-subject marker *sí* but not *túú*.

(40) a. *tá bò túú yéé.*

tá bò túú yéé  
 SUB they Neg go  
 “Let them not go.”

b. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mó tá bò túú yéé.*

ø-tàâ w-á à kî fwónê mó tá bò túú yéé  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB they Neg go  
 “The father said that they should not go.”

(41) a. *bón (kàá) bó sî yéé.*

bón (kàá) bó sî yéé  
 SUB Neg they Neg go

“(It is advisable that) they should not go.”

- b. *tàá wá kî fwǒŋ mǎ bóŋ (kàá) bó sî yèé.*  
 ø-tàá w-á à kî fwónê mǎ bóŋ (kàá) bó sî yèé  
 1-father 1-the SM P2 say that SUB Neg they Neg go  
 “The father said that (it is advisable that) they should not go.”

## 6. The simultaneity mood

What we term the simultaneity mood is roughly equivalent, at least as regards formal aspects, to the participial mood in English. We prefer to use the expression *simultaneity* here in order to highlight the semantic content. The simultaneity mood is generally characterised by two events, one secondary to the other, occurring at the same time. The second event is, most often, the result of the first. The verb expressing the primary event comes first while that expressing the secondary event follows the object or the verb if there is no object. The simultaneity mood is always expressed in the imperfective aspect. In the past tenses, and in negative constructions, the secondary verb is marked by an initial homorganic nasal consonant. Apart from the homorganic nasal consonant which appears on the secondary verb in past tenses and in negative constructions, there is no formal element marking the simultaneity mood in Bafut.

- (42) a. *nìbà'á nó ní mǎlù'ù njǎ'ǎ.*  
 nìbà'á à nó ní mǎ-lù'ù N-jǎ'ǎ  
 Niba SM drink it 6-palm wine N-cry  
 “Niba is drinking palm wine (and) crying.”

- (43) a. *nìbà'á lî nnó ní mǎlù'ù njǎ'ǎ.*  
 nìbà'á à lî N-nó ní mǎ-lù'ù N-jǎ'ǎ  
 Niba SM P1 N-drink it 6-palmwin N-cry  
 Niba was drinking palm wine crying.”

- b. *nìbà'á kálí kǐ nó ní mǎlù'ù jǎ'ǎ.*  
 nìbà'á à kálí kǐ nó ní mǎ-lù'ù jǎ'ǎ  
 Niba SM F1 Asp drink it 6-Palm wine cry  
 “Niba will be drinking palm wine crying.”

- (44) a. *à kî sí nó ní mǎlù'ù njǎ'ǎ.*  
 à kî sí nó ní mǎ-lù'ù N-jǎ'ǎ  
 He P2 Asp drink it 6-palm N-cry  
 He was drinking palm wine crying.”
- b. *à káló kǐ nó ní mǎlù'ù yǎ'ǎ.*  
 à káló kǐ nó ní mǎ-lù'ù jǎ'ǎ  
 He F2 Asp drink it 6-pwine cry  
 Niba will be drinking palm wine crying.”

- (45) a. *à lé sí nó ní mǎlù'ù njǎ'ǎ.*  
 à lé sí nó ní mǎ-lù'ù n-jǎ'ǎ  
 He P3 Asp drink it 6-palm w N-cry  
 Niba was drinking palm wine crying.”
- b. *à kájí kǐ nó ní mǎlù'ù jǎ'ǎ.*  
 à kájí kǐ nó ní mǎ-lù'ù jǎ'ǎ  
 He F3 Asp drink 6-pwine cry  
 Niba shall be drinking palm wine crying.”

In the negative construction, the simultaneity mood employs the usual negative markers (*kàá*)...*wá'á* and provokes word order changes of the same type described in the indicative mood. Following are two sentences to illustrate.

- (46) a. *(kàá) à kî sí wá'á ní mîlù'ù ù nó njó'ô.*  
 (kàâ) à kî sí wá'â ní mî-lù'ù nó N-jè'ê  
 Neg he P3 Asp Neg it 6-palm wine drink N-cry  
 "He was not drinking palm wine crying."
- b. *(kàá) à káló wá'á kà nó ní mîlù'ù ù njó'ô.*  
 (kàâ) à káló wá'â kà nó ní mî-lù'ù N-jè'ê  
 Neg he P3 Neg Asp drink it 6-palm wine N-cry  
 "He will not be drinking palm wine crying."

## 7. The Potential mood

The potential mood is generally used to express "the ability to act". It is very restricted in its range of tenses and as such, to express potentiality in many tenses, roundabout methods are employed often leading to an overlap of the meanings of the potential and conditional moods.

### A. The present

The potential mood in the indefinite present is marked by *mbó* positioned immediately before the subject of the sentence. This morpheme, which is morphosyntactically identical to the conditional mood marker, is accompanied by a replacive high tone which surfaces on the subject marker or on the verb (in the absence of a subject marker). The potential mood can be used to express one or more propositions. In the latter, the utterance expresses a kind of "ability-condition" relation in which the condition clause exhibits properties of a consequence clause in a condition-consequence relation.

- (47) a. *mbó ñ-kàà í sàtô ñ-sóô.*  
 mbó ñ-kàà í sàtô ñ-sóô  
 Potl. 9-monkey SM tear 9-elephant  
 "A monkey can tear an elephant to pieces."
- b. *mbó m̀ lè'è-sô ø-mândzì w-á.*  
 mbó m̀ lè'è-sô ø-mândzì w-á  
 Potl. I Slip-CAUS 1-road 1-the  
 "I can make the road slippery."
- c. *mbó ø-bùsĩ á jó'ô ñ-kxì ḿ mbó ò kwírê mí'ì mî.*  
 mbó ø-bùsĩ á jó'ô ñ-kxì ḿ mbó ò kwírê mí'ì mî  
 Potl. 1-cat SM swim 1-water that Cond. you tie eyes its  
 "A cat can swim in water if you tie its eyes."

The negative construction employs the presubject negative marker *kàâ* and the post-subject *wá'á* with the usual word order effects (SVO to SOV).

- (48) a. *kàá mbó ñ-kàà wá'á ñgòò bú'ù.*  
 kàá mbó ñ-kàà í wá'â ñ-gòò bú'ù  
 Neg Potl. 9-monkey SM Neg 9-drum play  
 "A monkey cannot play a drum."

### B. The future

The potential mood is not expressed in the past tenses. Instead, utterances that translate the ability to act in the past into English are expressed using the conditional mood. In the future tenses, the potential mood is marked by *mbó* just as in the definite present discussed immediately above. In the future tense, the potential clause is often followed by a condition clause which sets the condition that guarantees the ability to act.

- (49) a. *mbó mà ló mbóó ndá mó mbóó fá ñkábê.*  
 mbó mà ló N-bóó ñ-dâ mó mbó ò fá ñ-kábê  
 Potl. I F2 N-build 9-house that Cond. you give 9-money  
 “I can build a house tomorrow if you provide the money.”

Notice the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the verb of the potential clause and the use of the contracted form of the F2 marker (*ló* instead of *káló*) as in the case of the subjunctive mood.

### Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter combined tense, aspect and mood because the interaction between them is so close that separating them would invariably lead to inadequacies in the discussion. In the course of the presentation, we noticed another interesting type of interaction between negation and tense. Principally, we observed that the inclusion of the negation morpheme causes the verb to occur in sentence-final position. This fact, which has generated a lot of interest among formal syntacticians is characteristic of most Grassfields Bantu languages. Some of these languages exhibit other curiosities with respect to the interaction between tense and negation. In Menka for instance, the inclusion of negation in some constructions excludes the tense marker. Such patterns of interaction call for a closer examination of the relationship between tense and negation in language in general and especially in the Grassfields Bantu languages.

## Chapter 8 Compound tenses and deficient verbs

### Introduction

Compound tenses in Bafut, that is tenses marked by more than one element, are characterised by the use of a large number of deficient verbs. By definition, the deficient verb is one which is (i) not associated with a specific meaning; instead the meaning is determined from the context in association with another (main) verb, (ii) irregular in its form. This category of verbs includes the verbs “to be” and “to have” principally because of their irregularity in form. The category also includes many other grammatical formatives some of which have adverbial meanings. In the first part we treat purely deficient verbs and in the second part we handle the verbs “to be” and “to have”.

### 1. Deficient verbs

Deficient verbs in Bafut look like ordinary verbs in three respects: (i) they pattern into the two verb tone classes LH and H(H)L, (ii) when preceded by the P1 and P3 tense markers *lí* and *líé*, the deficient verb takes an initial nasal consonant which is homorganic in place of articulation with the initial consonant of the verb stem, (iii) like ordinary verbs in a consecutive structure, deficient verbs regularly provoke the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on following verbs in past tenses. Semantically, deficient verbs increase or lessen the force of the main verb and at times function like adverbial elements. I have decided to treat those that have adverbial connotations as deficient verbs because of their distribution and morphological effects on following verbs. Structurally, the deficient verb follows a regular tense marker and precedes the main verb except in negative constructions where it follows the negative marker and precedes the object if the verb is pushed to sentence-final position. Deficient verbs are treated in the following subsections.

#### A. *ɣàə*

This deficient verb has the meaning of “nearly”, “to be on the point of doing but never quite doing”. It is used predominantly in the past tenses. Its usage in the future tenses is, at best, rather odd.

- (1) a. *mə ɣàə wə.*  
mə ɣàə wə  
I nearly fall  
“I nearly fell.”
- b. *bó lí n-ɣàə ʒwítə ɣâ.*  
bó lí N-ɣàə ʒwítə ɣâ  
they P1 N-nearly kill me  
“They nearly killed me.”

The negative conjugation employs the optional presubject marker *kàá* and the post subject markers *sí* if the utterance has no tense marker and *wá'á* if a tense marker is present.

- (2) a. *(kàá) mə sí ɣàə wə.*  
(kàá) mə sí ɣàə wə  
Neg I Neg nearly fall

“I did not nearly fall.”

- b. *(kàá) bó lí ñwá’á yàǎ ʒwítá yá.*  
 (kàá) bó lí N-wá’á yàǎ ʒwítá yá  
 Neg they P1 N-Neg nearly kill me  
 “They did not nearly kill me.”

- c. *(kàá) bó lí wá’á yá yàǎ ʒwítá.*  
 (kàá) bó lí N-wá’á yá yàǎ ʒwítá  
 Neg they P1 N-Neg me nearly kill  
 “They did not nearly kill me.”

Notice that in the negative conjugation, the main verb can remain in situ (2b) or move to sentence-final position (2c). In the later case, the main verb moves along with the deficient verb.

### B. fùû

This deficient verb denotes “to do before”, “to do first”. It is used in the past, present and future tenses. As usual, the interpretation of the utterance in the present tense has a past relevance. The use of this verb often involves a two-clause construction expressing a kind of preceding-subsequent action relation. The subsequent clause is itself introduced by another deficient verb *tígí* which we discuss below under (g).

- (3) a. *mándzòŋ wá fùû mmá’á bînwì ntígí mfú ntsò.*  
 ø-mándzòŋ w-á á fùû N-mà’á bî-nwì N-tígí N-fû á ñ-tsò  
 1-army 1-the SM first N-throw 2-gods N-then N-go to 1-war  
 “First the army worshipped the gods and then moved on to the battle field.”
- b. *mándzòŋ wá lí mfùû mmá’á bînwì mbóŋ fú ntsò.*  
 ø-mándzòŋ w-á à lí N-fùû N-mà’á bî-nwì N-bòŋ fû á ñ-tsò  
 1-army 1-the SM P2 N-first N-throw 2-gods N-before go to 1-war  
 “The army first worshipped the gods before moving on to the battle field.”

In the (b) example, the presence of the P1 tense marker provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the deficient verb which in turn provokes the occurrence of a subsequent one on the main verb. Compare this with the (a) example which lacks the P1 marker and the homorganic nasal consonant is found on the main verb only. The subsequent clause in (3a) contains a deficient verb which, normally, provokes the homorganic nasal on the following verb while that in (3b) contains a time adverbial which does not provoke the occurrence of the homorganic nasal consonant.

In the negative conjugation, only the preceding clause, that is the clause containing the deficient verb can be negated. In this form, both the deficient verb and the main verb either remain in situ or move to the end of the clause.

- (4) a. *(kàá) mándzòŋ wá kî wá’á fùû mmá’á bînwì mbóŋ fú ntsò.*  
 kââ ø-mándzòŋ w-á à kî wá’á fùû N-mà’á bî-nwì N-bòŋ fû á ñ-tsò  
 Neg 1-army 1-the SM P2 Neg first N-throw 2-gods N-before go to 1-war  
 “The army did not first worship the gods before going on into battle.”
- b. *(kàá) mándzòŋ wá kî wá’á bînwì fùû mmá’á mbóŋ fú ntsò.*

kàâ ø-mándzòŋ w-á à kì wá'á bì-nwì fùu N-mà'á N-bòŋ fù á ñ-tsò  
 Neg 1-army 1-the SM P2 Neg 2-gods first N-throw N-before go to 1-war  
 “The army did not first worship the gods before going on into battle.”

### C. *yènsô*

This deficient verb has a wide range of interpretations which include “just to do”, “to act merely”, “to do suddenly”, “as soon as”, “to do in a sweep”, etc. It is used in all the tenses.

(5) a. *nàà já yènsì nlíntó jí á wó*

ø-nàà j-á í yènsô N-líntó jí á wó  
 9-animal 9-the SM merely N-look him he fall  
 “The animal merely looked at him and he fell.”

b. *àmǎ wá lí nyènsì nlíntó jí ntǎá nyèè.*

àm-ǎ w-á à lí N-yènsì N-líntó jí N-tǎá N-yèè  
 1-chief 1-the SM P1 N-simply N-look him N-pass N-go  
 “The chief simply looked at him and passed on.”

c. *bìsínǎ bjá kì yènsí nnó mlù'ù mjá mbáánó.*

bì-sínǎ bj-á bí kì yènsô N-nô mì-lù'ù mj-á N-báánó  
 2-birds 2-the SM P2 as soon N-drink 6-Palm wine 6-the N-drunk  
 “As soon as the birds drank the palm wine they became drunk.”

d. *bìbwèrô bjá kálô yènsí fú bú kí lǎô ñkwéè.*

bì-bwèrô bj-á bí kálô yènsô fù bú kí lǎô N-kwéè  
 2-lazy people 2-the SM F2 as soon go D-VERB Asp D-VERB N-return  
 “No sooner will the lazy people arrive at the farm than they will be at once for returning home.”

The last example is a complex form which makes use of three deficient verbs *yènsô*, *bú* and *lǎô*. We return to the last two in a moment. For now, notice that in the future tense, *yènsô* does not provoke a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb. Also, *yènsô* itself can take a homorganic nasal consonant if preceded by the P3 or P1 tense marker as in (5b). This homorganic nasal consonant on *yènsô* disappears when the negative marker is inserted as in the following example.

(6) *(kàá) mǎ wá lí wá'á yènsì nlíntó jí ntǎá nyèè.*

(kàá) mǎ wá à lí wá'á yènsô N-líntó jí N-tǎá N-yèè  
 Neg chief the SM P1 Neg merely N-look him N-pass N-go  
 “The chief did not merely look at him and go by.”

### D. *bú*

The repetitive deficient verb *bú* indicates “do again”, “repeat”. In the negative conjugation, *bú* employs the usual negative markers *(kàá)...* *wá'á/sí* and optionally moves with the verb to sentence-final position.

(7) a. *à bú nyèè yú.*

à bǔ N-γḗḗ γύ  
 he again N-go there  
 “He has gone there again.”

b. à kî bú ηγḗḗ γύ.  
 à kî bú N-γḗḗ γύ  
 he P2 again N-go there  
 “He went there again.”

(8) a. (kàá) à sî bú ηγḗḗ γύ.  
 (kàâ) à sî bǔ N-γḗḗ γύ  
 Neg he Ne again N-go there  
 g  
 “He has not gone there again.”

b. (kàá) à sî γύ bú ηγḗḗ.  
 (kàâ) à sî γύ bǔ N-γḗḗ  
 Neg he Neg there again N-go  
 “He has not gone there again.”

(9) a. (kàá) à kî wá’á bù ηγḗḗ γύ.  
 (kàâ) à kî wá’á bù N-γḗḗ γύ  
 Neg he P2 Neg again N-go there  
 “He did not go there again.”

b. (kàá) à kî wá’á γύ bú ηγḗḗ.  
 (kàâ) à kî wá’á γύ bǔ N-γḗḗ  
 Neg he P2 Neg there again N-go  
 “He did not go there again.”

### E. lḡḡ

The deficient verb *lḡḡ* denotes “want to”, “about to do”. It is one of the few deficient verbs that has a pure verb meaning in addition to its deficient verb function. Ordinarily, *lḡḡ* means “to look for/to search” and in this meaning/usage it never co-occurs with any other verb. Like all other deficient verbs discussed so far, *lḡḡ* provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb. Its behaviour in negative conjugations is also identical to that of the other deficient verbs.

(10) a. mḡ lḡḡ ηγḗḗ.  
 mḡ lḡḡ N-γḗḗ  
 I Want N-go  
 “I want to go.”

b. (kàá) mḡ sí lḡḡ ηγḗḗ.  
 (kàâ) mḡ sí lḡḡ N-γḗḗ  
 Neg I Neg want N-go  
 “I do not want to go.”

(11) a. mḡ kî lḡḡ ηγḗḗ.  
 mḡ kî lḡḡ N-γḗḗ  
 I P2 want N-go  
 “I wanted to go.”

b. (kàá) mḡ kî wá’á lḡḡ ηγḗḗ.  
 (kàâ) mḡ kî wá’á lḡḡ N-γḗḗ  
 Neg I P2 Neg want N-go  
 “I did not want to go.”

### F. té’é

This is an occasional deficient verb which denotes “to do ever”, “to do once upon a time”. The utterance in which it is used often has the form of a question and can be interpreted as such. However, the same utterance can also be interpreted as an ordinary statement denoting absolute (emphatic) negativity and at times doubt.

(12) a. mîjàà léê nté’é ηkéntó ηkónḡ ?  
 ḡ-mîjàà à léê N-té’é N-kéntô á N-kónḡ  
 1-river SM P3 N-ever N-stop to N-flow  
 “Has a river ever stopped flowing?”  
 “A river has never ever stopped flowing.”



- b. *nì kì té'é njá ndì wá?*  
 nì kì té'é N-já ñ-dì w-á  
 you(pl) P2 even see 1-witch 1-the  
 “Did you see the witch at all?”  
 “You did not even/as much as see the witch.”

In the negative conjugation, the utterance states a negative fact in a very emphatic manner.

- (13) a. *(kàá) mìjàà léê nté'é wá'à kéntô ã N-kóhê*  
 (kàâ) ø-mìjàà à lê N-té'é wá'â kéntô á N-kóhê  
 Neg river SM P3 N-ever Neg stop to N-flow  
 “A river has never ever stopped flowing any way/after all.”
- b. *(kàá) nì kì té'é wá'á ndì wá já.*  
 (kàâ) nì kì té'é wá'â ñ-dì w-á já  
 Neg you(pl) P2 even Neg 1-witch 1-the see  
 “You did not even see the witch (so do not try to contradict me).”

### G. tígí

The deficient verb *tígí* indicates “do after”, “happen afterwards”. It is very commonly used in narrative discourse to mark subsequent actions/events. In the negative conjugation, *tígí* employs the usual negative markers *(kàâ)...* *wá'â* and optionally moves with the verb to sentence-final position.

- (14) a. *bì'ì tígí ñkxô.*                      b. *(kàá) bì'ì wá'à tìgì ñkxô*  
 bì'ì tígí ñ-kxô                              (kàâ) bì'ì wá'â tìgì ñ-kxô  
 we then N-run                              Neg we Neg then run  
 “We then ran away.”                      “We then did not run away.”

### H. yá'ásê

This deficient verb denotes “to act always”, “to do continually”, “to do constantly”. By its very nature (the verb denotes continual action), it is always used in the progressive form. It is one of the deficient verbs with an adverbial meaning but we have decided to treat it here simply as a deficient verb because (i) it has the same distribution as other deficient verbs (it occurs after the tense marker and immediately precedes the main verb), (ii) it provokes a homorganic nasal consonant on following verbs in the past tenses as all other deficient verbs do, and (iii) in the negative construction, like other deficient verbs, it either forces the main verb to remain in situ or moves with it to sentence-final position.

- (15 a. *bóó bí ñgwú yá'ásê ntó ní mîdzî.*  
 )  
 b-óó b-í ñ-gwú bí yá'ásê N-tô ní mî-dzî  
 2-children 2-AM 9-hen SM often N-fight over 6-food  
 “Chicks always fight over food.”
- b. *(kàá) bóó bí ñgwú sí yá'ásê ntó ní mîdzî.*  
 (kàâ) b-óó b-í ñ-gwú bí sí yá'ásê N-tô ní mî-dzî  
 Neg 2-children 2-AM 9-hen SM Neg often N-fight over 6-food  
 “Chicks do not always fight over food.”

- c. (kàá) bós bí ngwú sí ní mǐdǔf yá'ásó ntó.  
 (kàâ) b-óð b-í ñ-gwú bí sí ní mǐ-dǔf yá'ásó N-tô  
 Neg 2-children 2-AM 9-hen SM Neg over 6-food often N-fight  
 "Chicks do not always fight over food."

### l. tsínì

The deficient verb *tsínì* encodes the notion of obligation. In its usage, it indicates "to do of necessity", "needs be", "must do", etc. It has an alternative form *mùsɛ* which, from the form and meaning, appears, most likely, to be derived from English "must". The use of the two forms is however identical. In the illustrations that follow, we use only the pure Bafut form *tsínì*.

- (16) a. *mûŋkxɔ tsínì njù'ùtí ntsù táá jì.*  
 ø-mûŋkxɔ à tsínì N-jú'útô ñ-tsù ø-tàâ j-ì  
 1-child SM Have to N-listen 1-mouth 1-father 1-his  
 "A child has to listen to/obey the father."
- b. *bìfð lé ntsínì njò'ɔ bǎŋgǐè bíyà'àtə.*  
 bì-fð bí lé N-tsínì N-jó'ô b-àŋgǐè bí-yà'àtə  
 2-chiefs SM P3 N-ave to N-marry 2-women 2-many  
 "Chiefs had to marry many wives."
- c. (kàá) *mûŋkxɔ fǎǎlé sǐ tsínì njù'ùtí ntsù táá jì.*  
 (kàâ) ø-mûŋkxɔ fǎǎlé à sǐ tsínì N-yú'útô ñ-tsù ø-tàâ j-ì  
 Neg 1-child today SM Neg Have to N-listen 1-mouth father 1-his  
 "A child (of) today no longer has to listen to the father."
- d. (kàá) *bìtsɔ'ɔ lé wá'à tsínì njò'ɔ bǎŋgǐè bíyà'àtə.*  
 (kàâ) bì-tsɔ'ô bí lé wá'â tsínì N-jó'ô b-àŋgǐè bí-yà'àtə  
 Neg 2-guards SM P3 Neg Have to N-marry 2-women 2-many  
 "The chief's body guards did not have to marry many women."

### J. bós

The deficient verb *bós* denotes "to do just", "do merely", "do for a short time". Like the others, it is used in the past, present and future tenses and employs the negative markers *kàâ...wá'â/sǐ*. It has an aspectual meaning which is similar to the meaning of the attenuative verb extension which encodes the idea of "do lightly", "do for a short time".

- (17) a. *à bós njə'ə*                      b. *à lí mbós njə'ə.*                      c. *à kálò bós jə'ə*  
 à bós N-jə'ə                      à lí m-bós N-jə'ə                      à kálò bós jə'ə  
 he slightly N-cry                      he P1 N-slightly N-cry                      he F2 slightly cry  
 "He has cried a little."                      "He cried a little."                      "He will cry a little."

Notice the effect of the high tone of the P1 tense markers which spreads over to the verb "cry" in (17b).

- d. (kàá) *à sǐ bós njə'ə.*                      e. (kàá) *à kálò wá'à bós njə'ə.*  
 (kàâ) à sǐ bós N-jə'ə                      (kàâ) à kálò wá'â bós N-jə'ə

Neg he Neg slightly N-cry  
 “He has not cried a little.”

Neg he F2 Neg slightly N-cry  
 “He will not cry a little.”

### K. wàṅsô

This deficient verb encodes the meaning of “do quickly/hurriedly”. It is one of the deficient verbs that can easily lend itself to an adverbial treatment but we decide to handle it here as a deficient verb because, like *yá’ásô* above, *wàṅsô* (i) has the same distribution as other deficient verbs (it occurs after the tense marker and immediately precedes the main verb), (ii) provokes a homorganic nasal consonant on following verbs in the past tenses as all other deficient verbs do, (iii) in the negative construction, like other deficient verbs, it either remains in situ with the main verb or moves with it to sentence-final position.

(18) a. *à kî wàṅsî mbîîî ntsó ḡkxî.*  
 à kî wàṅsô N-bîîî N-tsô á ḡ-kxî  
 he P2 quickly N-wake up N-go Prep N-water  
 “He got up quickly (early) and went to fetch water.”

b. *(kàâ) à lé wá’â wàṅsî mbîîî máá ñ-dṣwî.*  
 (kàâ) à lé wá’â wàṅsô N-bîîî máá ñ-dṣwî  
 Neg SM P3 Neg quickly N-get up that 9-day  
 “he did not get up early on that day.”

c. *(kàâ) à lé wá’â máá ñ-dṣwî wàṅsî mbîîî.*  
 (kàâ) à lé wá’â máá ñ-dṣwî wàṅsô N-bîîî  
 Neg SM P3 Neg that 9-day quickly N-get up  
 “he did not get up early on that day.”

### L. kî

The morpheme *kî* functions both as a deficient verb and a coordinating element. As a deficient verb, it encodes the meaning of “do in addition to”, “do as others have done”. As a coordinating element, it functions to conjoin verb phrases and predicative adjectival phrases. In this section, we focus on its role as a deficient verb reserving treatment of its role as a coordinator for chapter 11. Like other deficient verbs, *kî* occurs after the tense marker and immediately precedes the main verb. It also provokes a homorganic nasal consonant on following verbs in the past tenses.

(19) a. *mè kî ḡwò.*  
 mè kî N-wò  
 I also N-fall  
 “I fell too (like the others).”

b. *bó ìḡ ḡkî ñṣwítí nó.*  
 bó í N-kí N-ṣwítê nó  
 they P1 N-also N-kill snake  
 “They also killed a snake (in addition to a spider).”  
 “They also killed a snake (in addition to building a fire).”  
 “They too killed a snake (like the other people).”

## 2. The verb “to be”

The verb “to be” in Bafut has three finite forms: *à ní*, *à bó*, and *tsí* and one non-finite form *á mbâ*. The finite forms are used in independent finite clauses marking a variety of predications (identification, description, location, etc.) of the type “it is X”, “X is (in)”. The non-finite form, on the other hand, is used in infinitival dependent clauses which are subordinate to verbs of desire and psych-verbs such as “want”, “like”, “fit”, etc. to mark a kind of dependent relation of the type “want to be X”.

#### A. Identification

To express simple identification of the type “it is a palm tree”, “who is it?”, etc. the form *à ní* is used. This form which can be broken down into *à* “it” and *ní* “is” is very often contracted simply to *ǎ* but the meaning remains unchanged. In the negative conjugation, the infinitival form *à...bó* is used with *bó* occurring in sentence-final position.

- (20) a. *à ní/ǎ kə ?*      b. *à ní/ǎ nìyô/mìyô.*  
*à ní/ǎ àkə*      *à ní/ǎ nìyô/mìyô*  
 it is what      it is palm tree(s)  
 “What is it?”      “It is a palm tree/palm trees.”
- c. *à ní/ǎ wò ?*      d. *à ní/ǎ mǎð/bìfð wâ/bjâ.*  
*à ní/ǎ wò*      *à ní/ǎ mǎð/bìfð wâ/bjâ*  
 it is who      it is chief(s) the  
 “Who is it?”      “It is the chief(s)”

- (21) a. *(kàá) à sì níyó bó.*      b. *(kàá) à sì bífð bjâ bó.*  
*(kàâ) à sì nìyô bó*      *(kàâ) à sì bìfð bjâ bô*  
 Neg it Neg palmtree be      Neg it Neg chiefs the be  
 “It is not a palmtree.”      “It is not the chiefs.”  
 “Is it not the chiefs again?”

#### B. Description

Predication referring to a description is normally expressed by the form *à bó* followed by the predicative noun or adjective. As in the previous case, *à bó* can be broken down into two parts: *à* a pronominal form meaning “it”, “he”, or “she” and *bó* meaning “is”. The form of the pronominal *à* changes depending on the class of the noun being described. In the case of adjectival predication, the adjective bears a concord marker determined by the class of the noun described. In all instances of the use of the *à bó* form, a particle *áá* which serves as a focus marker is inserted immediately following *bó*.

- (22) a. *mǎð yú bəá nwì jì'ì.*      b. *mǎð yú bəá jìnsíginì.*  
*mǎ-fð y-ú à bó áá nwì j-ì'ì*      *mǎð yú à bó áá jìnsíginì*  
 1-chief 1-this he is Foc ø-1-God 1-our      chief this he is Foc good  
 “This chief is our God.”      “This chief is a good one.”
- (23) a. *bìfð bú bóá bìnwì bí'í.*      b. *bìfð bú bóá bìsíginì.*  
*bìfð bú bí bó áá bìnwì bí'ì*      *bìfð bú bí bó áá bìsíginì*  
 chiefs these they are Foc Gods our      chiefs these they are Foc good  
 “These chiefs are our Gods.”      “These chiefs are good ones.”
- (24) *nìbò'ò nù bóá mìdzí mì'ínò tú ngjà.*

nì-b̀d̀'̀d̀ n-ù ní b́ó áá m̀i-dźí m-í'ínè á t̀ú ì-gj̀à  
 5-pumpkin 5-this it is Foc 6-food 6-our for 9-week  
 “This pumpkin is our food for one week.”

It is also generally acceptable to use the simple identification form *à ní* in a description predication. In this usage, *ní* remains the copula “is/be” while *à* is a pronominal “it”, “he” or “she” whose form changes depending on noun class.

- (25) a. *m̀f̀d̀ ỳú ní ǹwì j̀ì'̀ì.*  
 m̀-f̀d̀ ỳ-ù à ní ø-ǹwì j̀-ì'̀ì  
 1-chief 1-this he is 1-God 1-our  
 “This chief is our God.”
- b. *m̀f̀d̀ ỳú ní j̀ìnsí́gínì.*  
 m̀-f̀d̀ ỳ-ù à ní j̀ì-nsí́gínì  
 1-chief 1-this he is 1-good  
 “This chief is a good one.”

As we see from these examples, the use of either *à b́ó* or *à ní* in a descriptive predication has no major effect on the meaning of the utterance. The significant difference between (22) and (25) is therefore just one of emphasis: *à b́ó* is more emphatic than *à ní*. Notice that the focus marker *áá* in (22) adds to the emphatic nature of *à b́ó*.

### C. Location

To express location, the form *tsî* which literally means “to sit/stay” is used preceded by the regular subject marker and followed by a locative complement. The negative conjugation employs the regular negative markers *kàâ...sì/wá'á* with the usual word order effects.

- (26) a. *̀ǹsòd̀ wá tsíá mb̀h̀ ntá'á.*  
 ̀ǹ-sòd̀ w-á í tsî á m̀-b̀h̀ L ̀ǹ- tá'á  
 1-farm 1-the SM is on 9-slope 9-AM 1-hill  
 “The farm is on a slope.”
- b. *(kàâ) ̀ǹsòd̀ wá sàá mb̀h̀ ntá'á tsî.*  
 (kàâ) ̀ǹ-sòd̀ w-á í sí á m̀-b̀h̀ L ̀ǹ- tá'á tsî  
 Neg 1-farm 1-the SM Neg on 9-lope 9-AM 1-hill is  
 “The farm is not on a slope.”

The locative in these examples and elsewhere consists of a noun phrase introduced by a preposition. Prepositions are derived from body parts and they vary according to the locative relation between the subject and the noun phrase. We will discuss the properties of prepositions more fully in the next chapter.

### D. Dependent Relation

The infinitival form of the verb “to be”, that is *á mb́ó* is used exclusively in dependent clauses to express “the desire/condition to be X”. This infinitival form, like the finite forms used in identification and description consists of two parts *á* and *mb́ó*. The infinitival however differs from the finite forms in many respects. Whereas *à* in the finite forms bears a low tone and functions as a pronominal element, *á* in the infinitival form bears a high tone and functions like the infinitival “to” in English. In addition to these, the copula *b́ó*, like other non-finite verb forms in Bafut, takes an initial homorganic consonant. Following are some examples of the use of the non-finite form.

- (27) a. *̀ǹù j̀ìí l̀d̀s mb́ó ̀ǹgà̀ǹj̀é̀g̀óǹù ỳà tá b́í́ǹs.*  
 ̀ǹ-ù j̀-ìí á l̀d̀s á mb́ó ̀ǹ-gà̀ǹj̀é̀g̀óǹù ỳ-à tá à b́ì̀ǹs

1-person 1-who he want to be 1-disciple 1-my let him rise up  
 “He who wants to be my disciple should stand up.”

- b. *ηù jìí mà ’átí ηgwè ’è jì kù ’ùnó mbó ηgàηjògónù.*  
 η-ù j-íí à mà ’átî η-gwè ’è j-ì à kù ’ùnô á mbó η-gàηjògónù  
 1-person 1-who he leave 9-family 9-his SM fit to be 1-disciple  
 “He who has abandoned his family is fit to be a disciple.”

The negative conjugation employs the negative markers *kàâ...sì* or *túú* depending on the mood of the clause and it is often common to negate both the preceding and the dependent clauses.

- (28) *(kàá) ηù jìí sì ηgwè ’è jì mà ’átî (kàá) sì kù ’ùnó mbó ηgàηjògónù.*  
 (kàâ) ηù jìí à sì ηgwè ’è jì mà ’átî (kàâ) à sì kù ’ùnô á mbó ηgàη  
 Neg man who SM Neg family his leave Neg he Neg fit to be discip  
 “A man who does not leave his family is not fit to be a disciple.”

### 3. The verb “to have”

The verb “to have” in Bafut is a combination of the verb *tsî* “to be/to stay/to sit” and a preposition. The type of preposition used is determined by whether the utterance is a simple statement, a question or an answer to a question and on whether the verb expresses possession or association.

#### A. Simple statements and “Yes-No” Questions

In a simple statement and a “Yes-No” question, the verb “to have” expresses possession or indicates that one is associated with a certain condition. The preposition employed in this usage is *nî* “with” whose tone often changes to high in the neighbourhood of a high tone.

- (29) a. *mè tsí nî à-tsè ’ó-L-tû.* b. *(kàá) mè sì ní à-tsè ’ó-L-tû tsî.*  
 mè tsí nî à-tsè ’ó-L-tû (kàâ) mè sì ní à-tsè ’ó-L-tû tsî  
 I be with 7-cloth-AM- Neg I Neg with 7-cloth-AM-head be  
 Head  
 “I have a hat.” “I do not have a hat.”
- (30) a. *àtîrî já tsí nî mîtfè.* b. *(kàá) àtîrî já sì ní mîtfè tsî.*  
 à-tîrî j-á á tsí nî mî-tfè (kàâ) àtîrî já á sì ní mîtfè tsî  
 7-fool 7-the SM be with brain Neg fool the SM Neg with brain be  
 “The fool is intelligent.” “The fool is not intelligent.”
- (31) a. *m̀bà já tsí nî m̀wì ’ì.* b. *(kàá) m̀bà já sì ní m̀wì ’ì tsî.*  
 m̀bà já ì tsí nî m̀wì ’ì (kàâ) m̀bà já ì sì ní m̀wì ’ì tsî  
 meat the SM be with maggots Neg meat the SM Neg with maggots be  
 “The meat is maggoty/contains maggots.” “The meat is not maggoty/hasn’t got maggots.”

These utterances in (29-31) can all be turned into “Yes-No” questions (the type of questions that demand a simple “yes” or “no” for an answer) by simply raising intonation. This rising intonation corresponds to a register raising of the final tone on the last syllable of the utterance. The vowel of the preposition *í* coalesces with the initial vowel of the following word giving rise to *ə*.

## B. Content Questions

In content questions (questions of the type demanding the identification of a person or an object for an answer), the verb “to have” is marked by *tsî* and the preposition *á mbó* which literally means “in the hands of”. In this usage, the verb “to have” expresses only the notion of possession.

(32) a. *ñ-dóŋ dʒá tsí mbô wò?*

ñ-dóŋ dʒ-á dʒí tsî á ñ-bô w-ò?  
10-cups the SM be in 6-hands 6-who  
“Who has the cups?”

b. *dʒí tsí mbó mè.*

dʒ-í tsî á ñ-bô mè  
10-they be in 6-hands me  
“I have them.”

c. *(kàá) jí sé mbó mè tsî.*

(kàá) dʒ-í sè á ñ-bô mè tsî  
Neg 10-they Neg in 6-hands me be  
“I do not have them.”

Notice that in the negative construction, just like ordinary verbs in the language, the verb “to have” occurs in sentence-final position. Of course, this is a regular behaviour of verbs in Bafut and other related Grassfields Bantu languages.

## Conclusion

The elements which we have treated in this chapter as deficient verbs are actually elements which other people might like to treat as auxiliary verbs. We have however used the expression “deficient verbs” because their behaviour is fundamentally different from that of what we know as auxiliary verbs in English and French. The Bafut deficient verb does not bear tense morphology and cannot be separated from the main verbs as is the case with regular French/English auxiliary verbs. Also, while the phonological relationship between the regular auxiliary verb and negation is quite ‘close’ (notice contraction and cliticisation), no such close relation can be established between the Bafut deficient verb and negation. However, whether we give them the appellation verbs or auxiliary verbs, the treatment that we will give them is the same. What is in a name by the way?

## Chapter 9 Adverbs and prepositions

### Introduction

The formation and use of adverbs in Bafut is so intricately linked to the formation and use of prepositions that a discussion of one cannot exclude the other. Specifically, pure adverbs are rare in Bafut and what translates into English as adverbs are pure substantives (shorn of any inflection) used with prepositions. The prepositions themselves differ in form and function depending on the adverb with which it is associated. Because of this close link between adverbs and prepositions in the language, we have decided to describe these two word categories together in the present chapter beginning with prepositions.

### 1. Prepositions

Pure prepositions are rare in Bafut. There are only two elements which one can term genuine prepositions in the language. These are *á* and *ní* which are also used to derive more complex prepositions from body parts and other substantives.

#### 1.1. The Preposition *á*

This preposition can function on its own to mark either location or direction. In this usage, it immediately precedes a substantive used adverbially to specify a location or direction. In the following examples, the preposition *á* seems to be absent in the surface forms due to the general vowel deletion rule in Bafut which elides one of two contiguous vowels. The presence of the preposition is however felt in (1a) where it becomes *á* due to the influence of the preceding nasal in “spear”.

- (1) a. *tàá wá jógísì nìkǎǎ bée ntígí ñkúú ndânwì.*  
 ø-tàâ w-á à jógísì nì-kǎǎ á bée N-tígí N-kúú á ñ-dânwì  
 1-father 1-the SM lean 5-spear Prep outside N-then N-enter Prep 9-church  
 “The man leaned a spear (on the wall) outside and then entered the church.”
- b. *à jù ’ùmó ñgàn já ntígí ntóó ñgwé jǐ ndánwì.*  
 à jú’û-mó ñ-gàn j-á N-tígí N-tóó ñ-gwé j-ì á ñ-dânwì  
 he heard 9-story 9-the N-then N-send 1-wife 1-his to 9-church  
 “When he heard the story, he then sent his wife to church.”
- c. *bí kǎ ntsí ndânwì láá bìjèrǎ bí kó’ó níkàñ.*  
 bí kǎ n-tsí á ñ-dânwì láá bì-jèrǎ bí kó’ó á nì-kàñ  
 They when N-be Prep 9-church DEF 2-thieves SM climb Prep 5-ceiling  
 “Whenever people are in church, thieves climb up into the ceiling.”
- d. *ndánwì mé bó sígí mfê’è bée.*  
 ñ-dânwì í mě bó sígí m-fê’è á bée  
 9-church SM finish they descend N-go out Prep outside  
 “When the service is over, they climb down and go outside.”

It is evident from these examples that attributing a specific meaning to the preposition *á* is an exercise in futility as it variously denotes “into”, “to”, “up to”, “out of” (and in other contexts “at”, “on”, “in”, etc.). The actual meaning of *á* is contextually determined by the substantive that it precedes and at times by the verb with which it is used. Thus the real meaning of the preposition *á* isolated from the substantive and the verb, seems to be that of “with respect to”.



Hence the relevant sections of the utterances above may be translated as: “...entered with respect to the church”, “...send with respect to the church”, “...climb with respect to the ceiling”, and “...go out with respect to the church”.

The preposition *á* combines with body parts to derive complex prepositions denoting location, benefactive, source, etc. About 80% of prepositions in Bafut are formed in this way.

### A. Location

To specify location, *á* combines with the body parts *átû* “head”, *ñfî* “face”, *ñtsù* “mouth”, *ñdzìm* “back”, and *mfðŋ* “buttocks/anus/penis/vagina” and the locative elements *mbèè* “side”, and *mûm* “inside”, to form the complex prepositions outlined in the table below.

Table I: Body-part prepositions

Body part	Complex preposition	Sample phrase
à-tû	“head” á átû	“on (top)” á átú ndâ
ñ-fî	“face” á ñfî	“in front of” á ñfí ndâ
ñ-tsù	“mouth” á ñtsù	“at opening of” á ñtsù ndâ
ñ-dzìm	“back” á ndzìm	“at back of” á ndzìm ndâ
ñ-fðŋ	“buttock” á mfðŋ	“at bottom of” á mfíŋ ndâ
ñ-dzî’î	“vagina” á ndzî’î	“below/lower part of” á ndzî’î ndâ
ñ-bèè	“side” á mbèè	“beside/near” á mbèè ndâ
mûm	“inside” á mûm	“inside” á múm ndâ

The following sentences illustrate the use of some of these complex prepositions.

- (2) a. *bìfî mǎ’atî náá láá ndzî’î ndâ.*

bìfî bí mǎ’atê nàà láá á ñ-dzî’î ñ-dâ  
Bafut SM rear animals DEF Prep 9-vagina 9-house

The Bafuts rear/keep animals below/at lower part of the compound.”

- b. *ñdî wá tígí mmá’á nísðŋ njá tú ndâ.*

ñ-dî w-á à tígì N-mǎ’â ñi-sðŋ nj-á á à-tû ñ-dâ  
1-mother 1-the SM D-Verb N-throw 5-tooth 5-the Prep 7-head 9-house

“The old mother then threw the tooth on top of the house.”

### B. Benefactive

The benefactive preposition “to/for” is formed by combining the ordinary preposition *á* with the body part *mbô* “hands”.

- (3) a. *ñfð wá tígì ntǎsǎ mílù’ù mbó ñùñiyáá wá.*

ñ-fð w-á á tígì N-tǎsǎ mì-lù’ù á ñ-bó ñù-ñi-yáá w-á  
1-chief 1-the SM D-Verb N-send 6- Prep 6-hands 1-person-5-visit 1-the  
palmwine

“The chief then sent palmwine to the visitor.”

- b. *ñfð wá tígì ñwá mbí mbó ñùñiyáá wá.*

ñ-fð w-á à tígì N-wǎ ñ-bî á ñ-bó ñù-ñi-yáá w-á  
1-chief 1-the SM D-Verb N-slaughter 9-goat Prep 6-hands 1-person-5-visit 1-the

“The chief then slaughtered a goat for the visitor.”

- c. *m̄f̄ ð wá t̄ígì ñwá mbí yú mbô.*  
 m̄-f̄ ð w-á à t̄ígì N-wǎ m̄-b̄ yú m̄-b̄  
 1-chief 1-the SM D-Verb N-slaughter 9-goat Prep 6-hands  
 “The chief then slaughtered a goat for him/her.”

In the third example in (c)), the normal preposition is replaced by a complex anaphoric form *yú* which combines the meanings of the preposition ‘for’ and the pronoun ‘him/her’. Elsewhere in the language, *yú* is used as anaphoric locative adjunct meaning ‘there’. This special use of *yú* to mean ‘for him/her’ is unique to third person singular forms only (see chapter 4 for more on the pronoun system and chapter 12 for more the anaphoric use of *yú*). The combination *yú* + *body part* is possible with all the other body part prepositions presented in table I above. Such combinations yield meanings like ‘beside it’, ‘below it’, ‘above it’, ‘behind it’, etc.

### C. Source/Origin

The source/origin preposition “from” is also formed by combining the ordinary preposition *á* with the body part *m̄bô* “hands”. In utterances, both the verb used and the context distinguish the benefactive from source/origin. In source/origin constructions, the use of *m̄bô* “hands” is obligatory when the complement (of the preposition) noun is animate. When the complement noun is inanimate, *m̄bô* cannot be used, instead *á* alone is used.

- (4) a. *m̄ ð k̄ kw̄érí m̄t̄f̄è m̄ámû láá mbó kw̄ímáñk̄ð’ð.*  
 m̄ ð k̄ kw̄érí m̄-t̄f̄è m̄ámû láá á m̄-bó ø-kw̄ímáñk̄ð’ð  
 I P2 take 6-idea this DEF Prep 6-hands 1-tortoise  
 “I borrowed this idea from Tortoise.”
- b. *m̄t̄f̄è m̄ámâ k̄ l̄ láá mbó kw̄ímáñk̄ð’ð.*  
 m̄- m̄ámû m-í k̄ l̄ láá á m̄-bô ø-kw̄ímáñk̄ð’ð  
 t̄f̄è  
 6-idea this 6-SM P2 come DEF Prep 6-hands 1-tortoise  
 “This idea came from Tortoise.”
- (5) a. *ám̄bê k̄ kw̄érí ðú’ú̄t̄i m̄ájû láá w̄sáá.*  
 ám̄bê à k̄ kw̄érí à-ðú’ú̄t̄i m̄ájû láá á à-w̄sáá  
 Ambe SM P2 take 7-advice this DEF Prep 7-city  
 “Ambe got this advice from the city.”
- b. *àðú’ú̄t̄i m̄ájû k̄ ló láá w̄sáá.*  
 à-dhú’ú̄t̄i m̄ájû á k̄ ló láá á à-w̄sáá  
 7-advice this SM P2 come DEF Prep 7-city  
 “This advice came from the city.”

In the examples in (5), the use of *m̄bô* will imply that the advice came indirectly through the people of the city and not directly (as an experience) from the city itself. This feature of *m̄bô* regarding its presence or not with certain types of nouns is attested only in source/origin constructions. In benefactive constructions, the presence of *m̄bô* is obligatory.

## 1.2. The preposition *ní*

The preposition *ní* normally encodes the meaning of instrument and accompaniment. In some very special constructions however, it can also encode an applicative meaning. In this special usage where *ní* encodes the applicative meaning, its complement is a theme/patient NP.

- (6) a. *nìbà'á kî kàgítî mbà já nì múnwí.*  
 nìbà'á à kî kágítî m-bà j-á nì ø-múnwí  
 Niba SM P2 chop 9-meat 9-the with 1-knife  
 “Niba chopped the meat with a knife.”
- b. *bì kî mî fù jí ní mîlù'ù.*  
 bì à kî mî à-fù j-í ní mî-lù'ù  
 Bih SM P2 swallow 7-medicine 7-her with 6-Palm wine  
 “Bih took (swallowed) her medicines with palm wine.”
- c. *kwímánjkò'ò lé ndù'ù bísíj ní mîtfè.*  
 ø-kwímánjkò'ò à lé N-dù'ù bî-síj ní mî-tfè  
 1-tortoise SM P3 N-teach 2-birds with 6-knowledge  
 “Tortoise taught the birds a lesson”.

Although the special construction in (c) is structurally very similar to those in (a-b), the semantic/thematic role of the noun phrase that comes after *ní* in (c) is different from that in (a-b). Whereas this NP in (c) is directly affected by the action of the verb, those in (a-b) are not. The post *ní* NPs in (a-b) are rather the means and the accompaniment through which the action of the verb is achieved. Thus in (a) for instance, “meat” was chopped; the knife being the instrument used in the action. In (c) on the other hand, what was taught was “knowledge/a lesson), the “birds” were only the recipients of the action of teaching. Thus, whereas the NP after *ní* in the example in (c) is a theme/patient, the NP after *ní* in (a-b) is an instrument or accompaniment. This suggests that while the preposition *ní* introduces goal participants, the semantics of the verb also plays a major role in encoding the various interpretations.

Other special uses of the preposition *ní* are provided in the examples below which employ stative and passive verbs.

- (7) a. *àntòò wá lùú nì ñkxì.*  
 ø-àntòò w-á à lùú nì ñ-kxì  
 1-pot 1-the SM full with 1-water  
 “The pot is full with water.”
- b. *m̂f̂ wá kî kwó nì ñká'á.*  
 m̂-f̂ w-á à kî kwó nì ñ-ká'á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 die with 1-dysentery  
 “The chief died of/from dysentery.”

The NP complements of *ní* in these examples can serve as subjects in other constructions that can be considered semantic paraphrases of the counterparts in (7). Thus we could have *ñká'á kî zwító mf̂ wá* “Dysentery killed the chief” as a semantic paraphrase of (7b).

### 1.3. Derived prepositions

The expression *derived prepositions* is used here to refer to a set of personal pronouns that are used in adverbial phrases to give the meaning of “together with”, that is the meaning of accompaniment. These personal pronouns are: *bó/bóbì* “they/with them”, *bù/búbì* “you(pl)/with you”, *bì’ì/bí’íbì* “we/with us (exclusive)”. Although the two variants in each case are virtually interchangeable, the variant that ends with *bì* is used especially when the following noun is in the plural form.

- (8) a. *nìbà’à kì yèé ndânwì bóbì mbû dzî.*  
 nìbà’à à kì yèé á ò-dânwì bóbì m-bû dz-î  
 Niba SM P2 go Prep 9-church they with 9-dogs 9-his  
 “Niba went to church (together) with his dogs.”
- b. *á njèrô wáá kì kó bì’ì mbû.*  
 á ò-jèrô w-á-á kì kô bì’ì m-bû  
 Foc 1-thief 1-the+Foc P2 catch I+ with 9-dog  
 “The thief was caught by me together with a dog.”
- c. *ò kálô fú búbì mbú dzá.*  
 ò kálô fû búúbì m-bû dz-á  
 you(sg) F2 go farm you with 9-dogs 9-the  
 “You will go to the farm together with the dogs.”

### 1.4. The definite preposition

The definite preposition *wá* combines the functions of the ordinary preposition *á* and a definitiviser. It is used exclusively in situations where a definite location, source or benefactive has been mentioned earlier on in the discourse. Following are some examples of its use.

- (9) a. *m̄f̄d̄ wá tígì nt̄f̄ásí m̄l̄ù’ù wá mbó ñù-ñì-yáá wá.*  
 m̄-f̄d̄ w-á á tígì N-t̄f̄àsê m̄-l̄ù’ù wá m̄-bó ñù-ñì-yáá w-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM D-Verb N-send 6- Prep 6-hands Person-5-visit 1-the  
 palmwine  
 “The chief then sent palm wine to the visitor (the visitor already mentioned).”
- b. *ñd̄ì wá tígì mmá’á n̄ísòŋ njá wá tú ndá.*  
 ñ-d̄ì w-á á tígì N-mà’á ñì-sòŋ nj-á w-á à-tû ñ-dá  
 1-mother 1-the SM D-Verb N-throw 5-tooth 5-the Prep head 9-house  
 “The old mother then threw the broken tooth on the top of the house (the top already mentioned).”

Notice that the definite preposition still combines with body part nouns like the ordinary *á* and *ní*. In the example in (9a) for instance, a particular visitor had been mentioned or is understood in the context of the discourse. The speaker therefore uses the definite *wá* in this context for purposes of some sort of emphasis.

## 2. Adverbs

An adverb in Bafut is a word used to describe a predicative or a qualificative with respect to time, manner or place. Pure adverbs are particularly rare in the language and so other word

categories, especially substantives and deficient verbs (chapter 8), are employed adverbially. There is a close relationship between the noun and the adverb; many nouns are used as adverbs without any change or inflection and, further, many adverbs are directly formed from substantives by the use of inflectional formatives, and sometimes by the mere device of inserting a prepositional formative. Although the distinctions between time and place, in many cases, are by no means rigid, it is still most convenient to classify Bafut adverbs according to the traditional categories of manner, place and time.

## 2.1. Manner adverbs

Manner adverbs can be formed from nouns, adjectives, numerals and ideophones. The formation processes involve vowel insertion, inclusion of a prepositional formative and reduplication.

### A. Adverbs from nouns

The formation of adverbs from regular nouns involves the insertion of the prepositional formative *ní* immediately before the noun. Nouns that lend themselves readily to this process are laid out in the table below alongside the derived adverbs. Sentences illustrating the use of these adverbs follow the table.

Table II: Adverbs derived from Nouns

Noun		Derived Adverb	
mì-tfè	“knowledge/wisdom”	ní mìtfè	“wisely/intelligently”
mì-tì	“strength/energy”	ní mìtì	“energetically/quickly/once”
à-zî	“intention/cunning”	ní àzî	“intentionally/cunningly”
mì-dà’à	“strength/energy”	ní mìdà’à	“energetically/quickly/once”
h-jàŋô	“pain”	ní njàŋô	“painfully”
h-gí’î	“trouble/suffering”	ní hgi’î	“with difficulty”
nì-bó’ô	“fear”	ní nìbó’ô	“fearfully”

(10) a. *à kî jâtí mbà já nì mìtfè.*

à kî jâtô m-bà j-á nì mì-tfè

he P2 share 9-meat 9-the with 6-wisdom

“He shared the meat wisely (such that everyone had a piece).”

b. *à kî jâtí mbà já nó zî.*

à kî jâtô m-bà j-á ní à-zî

he P2 share 9-meat 9-the with 7-cunning

“He shared the meat cunningly (reserving the choicest pieces for his friends).”

In the example in (10b), the vowel of the preposition *ní* coalesces with that of the following noun giving rise to the vowel *í*.

In this category of adverbials, the form of the substantive per se does not change and so what introduces the adverbial meaning is the prepositional formative *ní* as well as the meanings of, and pragmatic relationship between the main verb and the post-*ní* substantive. The ordinary preposition *ní* generally encodes an instrumental meaning but in (10a – b), “wisdom” and “cunning” are not instruments that can be used to share meat and so pragmatic considerations favour an adverbial interpretation.

### B. Adverbs from adjectives

Bafut has a very limited number of pure adjectives (just a little over 4) and only one of these *síginì* ‘well/nice’ is used adverbially. Deriving an adverb from an adjective involves prefixing the vowel *í* to the adjective. The presence of this vowel is hardly ever felt on the surface due to the vowel deletion process which targets the second of two tautosyllabic vowel sequences. The presence of the vowel can however be felt in the example below which is rendered slowly and deliberately.

- (11) *à kì nǎŋ ísígìnì.*  
 à kì nǎŋ í-sígìnì  
 he P2 sleep well  
 “He slept well/nicely.”

### C. Adverbs from ideophones

Certain classes of ideophones can be used as adverbs describing manner in respect of transitive verbs. These adverbs are usually preceded by the formative *à* whose presence may not always be felt in surface forms because of vowel deletion effects. Unlike *ní* in the case of adverbs formed from nouns, *à* does not have any prepositional meaning. Examples of ideophones functioning as adverbs in transitive verb constructions are given below.

- (12) a. *mè kì sǐgǐsí bwíí wá bǒǒbǒǒ.*  
 mè kì sǐgǐsí ø-bwíí w-á à-bǒǒbǒǒ  
 I P2 lower 1-straw 1-the slowly/gently  
 “I lowered the straw slowly/gently/gradually.”
- b. *mè kì lígǐ nsòò wá yúmbô dǎŋdǎŋ.*  
 mè kì lígǐ ñ-sòò w-á yú-m-bó à-dǎŋdǎŋ  
 I P2 cultivate 1-farm 1-the him-6-hands freely  
 “I cultivated the field for him for free.”

Another adverb which falls into this category but which is somehow different from the others is *á-ŋgááŋgáá*. This adverb resembles the others in form and function but it is different in that whereas the non-reduplicated form in the previous two has no specific independent meaning, the non-reduplicated form in this latter has a specific meaning: “a period of time”. The use of this adverb is illustrated below.

- (13) a. *mè fwòŋmó mbó yò ŋgááŋgáá mǎ mǐlù’ù ká ʒwíté yô.*  
 mè fwòŋmó-mè á mbô yò á-ŋgááŋgáá mǎ mǐlù’ù mí ká ʒwíté yô  
 I say+Asp P hands you time time that pwine SM F0 kill you  
 “I have told you repeatedly that drinking will kill you.”
- b. *ŋgwìiní wò fáá ŋgááŋgáá.*  
 ñ-gwìinì í wǒ fáà á-ŋgááŋgáá  
 9-locusts SM fall here time time  
 “Locusts come here frequently/time and again.”

An adverb such as *á-dàṅdàṅdà* “for free” can be preceded by the intensifier *tsí’ì* which means “only” but the presence of this intensifier does not have any significant effect on the meaning of the utterance. Thus including this intensifier in the example in (12b) does nothing more than emphasise the point that the cultivation was done for free.

#### D. Adverbs from numerals

Adverbs describing manner can also be derived from numerals. The derivational process involves a simple reduplication of the numeral which is inflected for agreement. Numerals in Bafut function like adjectives and thus take an agreement marker determined by the class of the nouns that they describe. The following examples illustrate the use of the numerals “one” and “two” to describe the manner of an action performed by classes 1 and 2 nouns.

- (14) a. *bóó bjá lí mfê’è ṅkxókí jîmó’ó jîmó’ó*  
 bóó bjâ bí lí N-fê’ê N-kxòkâ jímò’ójímò’ò  
 children the SM P1 N-go out N-run one one  
 “The children ran out one after the other/one at a time.”
- b. *bóó bjá tóó ṅkàṅ bíbáábíábáá.*  
 b-óó bj-á bí tóó á ṅ-kàṅ bíbáábíábáá  
 2-children the SM stand Prep 1-line two two  
 “The children are lined up in pairs.”

The numerals *mò’ó* “one” and *báá* “two” take the agreement markers *jí-* and *bí-* respectively for the classes 1 and 2 nouns “child(ren)”. In the first example in (14a), although the noun is plural (class 2), the numeral takes the agreement marker for class 1 in order to correspond to the idea of one child out of a group of many performing the action at a time. That is, it is one child that gets out and escapes at a time and not all the children at the same time.

#### 2.2. Place adverbs

There are no locative adverbs per se in Bafut except for a restricted class of demonstrative pronouns. Instead, ordinary substantives are used as adverbs; the only requirement being that the substantive be preceded by the preposition *á*. These locative phrases denote the place at, on, in, into, to, from or out of which the action takes place. The specific meaning of the locative phrase is determined by the verb with which it is used, or the context in which it is found; for instance:

- (15) a. *ṅtsò wá lí mfê’á wùsáá*  
 ṅ-tsò w-á í lí N-fê’é á à-wùsáà  
 1-war 1-the SM P1 N-go out Prep city  
 “The war happened/took place in the city.”
- b. *nó já lí mfê’á mǐjǎá.*  
 n-ó j-á ì lí N-fê’é á ø-mǐjǎà  
 9-snake 9-the SM P1 N-go out Prep 1-river  
 “The snake came out of the river.”
- c. *mè lí nníṅ ṅkábí jáá ṅkòm.*  
 mè ì N-níṅ ṅ-kábí j-á á ṅ-kòm  
 I P1 N-put 9-money 9-the Prep 9-box  
 “I put the money in a box.”

- d. *mè lí nìḡǵê ḡkábí jùá jàùndè.*  
 mè lì N-lḡǵê ḡ-kábî j-ù á jàùndè  
 I P1 N-take 9-money 9-this Prep Yaounde  
 “I took this money from Yaounde.”
- e. *mè lí ntóó mú wáá jàùndè.*  
 mè lì N-tóò m-û w-á á jàùndè  
 I P1 N-take 1-child 1-this Prep Yaounde  
 “I sent the child to Yaounde.”

In these examples, the same preposition *á* denotes “at”, “out of”, “in”, “from” and “to”. A specific interpretation can only be obtained from the meaning of the verb used as well as the context in which the locative phrase is used. For example, only context can tell us that in (15a) we are dealing with the place where an action took place while in (15b) we are concerned with the place out of which something came. In (15d), the verb *lḡǵê* “take” signals that the preposition *á* denotes “from” while in (15e) the verb *tóó* “send” signals that the same preposition denotes “to”. Notice that the vowel deletion rule which targets one of two contiguous vowels is suspended in these examples. The preposition *á* is preserved even though it is preceded by another vowel. This is probably due to the fact that *á* is the only morpheme, unlike in other cases where body parts and other elements participate in, marking the preposition in these examples.

The locative pronoun instantiates the only case of pure locative adverbials in Bafut. This pronoun functions like the demonstrative pronoun describing a location near the speaker (NS), near the listener (NL) and far away from both speaker and listener (FSL). There are three forms of this locative each determined by the degree of proximity between speaker, listener and object referred to. The first form signifies “here” indicating proximity to speaker. The second form signifies “there” indicating proximity to the listener. The third signifies “yonder” indicating relative distance from both speaker and listener but indicating that the location is within sight and can be pointed at. The three locative pronouns are: *fáà* “here (NS)”, *fjâ* “there (NL)” and *fî* “yonder (FSL)”. Their use is illustrated in the following sentences:

- (16) a. *té'ê ḡkjè já fáà.*                      b. *té'ê ḡkjè já fjâ.*                      c. *té'ê ḡkjè já fî.*  
 té'ê ḡ-kjè j-á fáà                      té'ê ḡ-kjè j-á fjâ                      té'ê ḡ-kjè j-á fî  
 put 9-basket 9-the here                      put 9-basket the there                      put 9-basket 1the yonder  
 “Put the basket here.”                      “Put the basket there.”                      “Put the basket yonder.”

Each locative pronoun has three forms corresponding to three different degrees of emphasis which we can capture in a scale ranging from 0 – 2. The simple locative pronouns presented above are the neutral forms (no emphasis) corresponding to the 0 degree emphasis. The other forms corresponding to the first and second degree emphasis are derived from the simple/neutral forms via suffixation and reduplication plus infixation. All the forms are outlined in the table below.

Table 9.III: Locative Pronouns

Near Speaker (NS)	Near Listener (NL)	Far from Speaker and Listener (FSL)	Degree of Emphasis
fáà	fjâ	fî	0
fálà	fjálâ	fílî	1
fálàfáà	fjáláfjâ	fílîfî	2



In actual usage, the degree of emphasis corresponds to the number of times that the speaker is forced to use the locative pronoun in a dialogue situation. Generally, the 0 degree emphasis, (i.e the simple/neutral locative pronoun) corresponds to the simple, neutral, first time of use. The 1 degree emphasis corresponds to a situation where the speaker has to repeat the pronoun for the first time. If he/she has to repeat it a second time, this will correspond to the 2 degree emphasis. Thus, picture this scenario where a speaker wants a listener to place an object at a specific spot near him (the speaker).

Description of Listener's action

Speaker's vocal reaction

Neutral first time

*nðŋsɪ fáà* “put it here.”

Listener misses spot

*ŋgáŋ, fálà* “no, here!”

Listener again misses spot.  
Speaker irritated. Voice louder.

*ŋgáŋ, fálàfáà* “no! here I mean”

Some speakers prefer to use alternative forms *fáàmó/fjámó/fîímó* in the place of the first degree emphatic forms *fálà/fjálâ/fîlî* and *fálàmó/fjálámó/fîlîmó* in place of the second degree emphatic forms *fálàfáà/fjáláfjâ/fîlîfîî*. The difference between the forms with *mó* and the others is simply stylistic.

The locative pronouns can also be used prepositionally in the sense that they precede a noun specifying the location of the noun in respect of the distance separating the speaker from the listener.

- (17) a. *zĩ nlðð ñkábí já fâá ndá.*  
 zĩ N-lèê ñ-kábì j-á fáà ñ-dâ  
 come N-keep 9-money 9-the here 9-house  
 “Come and keep the money in this house (in which I am/near me).”
- b. *lðð ñkábí já fjá ndá.*  
 lèê ñ-kábì j-á fjá ñ-dâ  
 keep 9-money 9-the there house  
 “Keep the money in that house (in which you are/near you).”
- c. *ɣèé nlðð ñkábí já fîí ndá.*  
 ɣèé N-lèê ñ-kábì j-á fîí ñ-dâ  
 come N-keep 9-money 9-the yonder 9-house  
 “Go and keep the money in that house yonder.”

In the first example, the location is near the speaker. It is near the listener in the second and far from both of them in the third case.

### 2.3. Time adverbs

Time adverbials in Bafut are words which indicate periods of time. These words do not have special inflections and some of them can be employed elsewhere as ordinary nouns. The majority of them however do not exhibit ordinary nominal properties such as number marking and modification by elements such as adjectives, determiners, pronouns, etc. Time adverbials do not have any special inflections but are generally positioned after the verb (or object noun phrase) without any accompanying prepositional element. Some of them however take a variant of the locative pronoun to specify “next” or “last” as in “next week” and “last week”. The following groups can be attested:

Table 9.IV: Time Adverbials

Group A: Adv. only		Group B: Pron. + Adv.	
ʃî	“today”	fií ñdzwî	“next day”
jðð	“yesterday/tomorrow”	fií ñgjà	“next week”
mbìì	“former times”	fàá sán	“this month”
tìtwúgî	“morning”	fií lòò	“next year”
ʃí'íní	“afternoon”		
ñkwêfð	“evening”		
nìtwúgî	“night”		
tsìtsòŋ	“now/presently”		
ñdzwìtsìim	“everyday”		
lélé	“everyday”		

The words in the first group are used without any inflections or accompanying grammatical elements such as prepositions to indicate a period of time. This group contains words which seem to be genuine adverbs in the language since the words do not exhibit properties of other word classes such as nouns (no number morphology, cannot be modified by a determiner, etc.). The words in group B cannot be used independently to mark a period of time; they must co-occur with a variant of the locative pronoun in order to qualify as time adverbials. The words in this group are ordinary substantives which, elsewhere, inflect for number and class and also accept modifiers such as adjectives, determiners, pronouns, etc.

- (18) a. *nìbà'á lɛ nzi nɛ ñkábí já ʃî.*  
 nìbà'á à lɛ N-3ì ní ñ-kábî j-á ʃî  
 Niba SM P1 N-come with 9-money 9-the today  
 “Niba came with the money today (he brought the money today).”
- b. *bɔɔ bá kálɔ̃ yèè ndâŋwà'ànì fií lòò.*  
 b-ɔɔ b-á bí káló yèé á ñ-dâ-ŋwà'ànì fií à-lòò  
 2-children 2-my SM F2 go Prep 9-house-book Loc. 7-year  
 “My children will go to school next year.”
- c. *mábú'ú ká lénsí ñkwí ní mfð njá fâá ñgjà.*  
 ø-mábú'ú à ká lénsí ñ-kwí n-í ñ-fð nj-á fâá ñ-gjà  
 1-mabu'u SM F0 announce 5-funeral 5-AM 1-chief 5-the Loc. 9-week  
 “Mabu'u (a special masquerade) will announce the chief's funeral this week.”
- d. *ñùtsù kî tðɔ̃ ntɔ̃'ɔ̃ jì'ì fií lòò.*  
 ñù-tsù à kî tðô ñ-tɔ̃'ô j-ì'ì fií à-lòò  
 Person-certain SM P2 burn 9-palace 9-our Loc. 7-year  
 “Someone burnt our palace last year.”

The examples in (18b, 18c and 18d) employ the locative pronouns *fââ* and *fií* to specify a period of time in the present, past and future. The same pronoun *fií* is used in (18b and 18d) and it is only the tense which helps to distinguish between “last year” and “next year” reference.

## Conclusion

Although we decided to treat prepositions and adverbs together in this chapter, it is worth mentioning that in some languages, it might actually be more expedient treating them apart. This will be the case especially for languages which have distinct adverbs whose form and function does not require prepositions. Such languages are, to the best of my knowledge, very rare in the Grassfields region of Cameroon. The languages in this region often have very few prepositions (usually two or three) which then combine with various formatives to derive the meaning and function of an adverb. However, researchers should bear it in mind that the two categories of adverbs and prepositions can be treated independently.

## Chapter 10 Interrogatives and focus

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the formation of questions and focus constructions. The decision to treat questions and focus together (i.e. in the same chapter) is driven by the structural similarities between the two constructions. The formation of questions involves very similar, if not identical prosodic, morphological and syntactic means as in focus. We explore these different means in both constructions while highlighting noticeable similarities and differences.

### 1. Question formation

Questions in Bafut divide into four major categories, some of which are capable of finer subdivisions. These categories are (a) yes-no questions, (b) content questions, (c) alternative questions and (d) confirmation questions. While prosody plays a major role in the formation of most of these questions, only some of them make use of morphological markings and a very restricted number exploit syntactic properties such as word order changes.

#### 1.1 Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions, as the name implies, require a simple *h̄h̄é* “yes” or *h̄gáŋ* “no” for an answer. The morphosyntactic structure of yes-no questions is very similar to that of ordinary declarative sentences. Four factors that relate to the phonology of the language however distinguish yes-no questions from declarative sentences. Specifically, yes-no questions are marked by (i) suspension of downdrift, (ii) a general suspension of boundary L tone docking, (iii) a general rise in intonation, and (iv) a faster delivery rate. The following examples illustrate suspension of downdrift. Compare the question example in (b) with the declarative counterpart in (a). The digits after the free translation represent the relative heights of the different H tones in the entire utterance with 5 representing the highest pitch level.

- (1) a. *bó ká kó síŋ wâ.* (5 4 3 2 1)  
bó ká kô ø-síŋ w-á  
they F0 catch 1-bird 1-the  
“They will catch the bird.”
- b. *bó ká kó síŋ wá?* (5 5 5 5 5)  
bó ká kô ø-síŋ w-á  
they F0 catch 1-bird 1-the  
“Will they catch the bird?”

In the declarative sentence in (a), the effect of the automatic lowering of subsequent H tones is visible (cf the digits within parenthesis which represent pitch levels). In the question sentence in (b), this automatic lowering is no longer attested as we notice that all the high tones maintain the highest pitch level (5).

The effect of the boundary L tone on question sentences depends a lot on the nature of the final syllable of the question sentence. As noted in earlier chapters, words in isolation and in sentence final position generally accept a L boundary tone such that an underlyingly H tone word such as /*nó*/ ‘drink!’ will surface with a falling contour tone when in absolute final position. In questions ending with this category of words that generally accept the boundary

L tone, boundary L tone docking is suspended such that the final syllable will surface with a H tone instead of the falling contour tone. This is illustrated in the sentence below.

- (2) a. *bì kî lígî nsòò wá nnô.*  
 bì à kî lígî ñ-sòò w-á N-nó  
 Bih SM P2 cultivate 1-farm 5-the N-drink  
 “Bih cultivated the farm and then drank wine (perhaps to celebrate).”
- b. *bì kî lígî nsòò wá nnó?*  
 bì à kî lígî ñ-sòò w-á N-nó  
 Bih SM P2 cultivate 9-farm 9-the N-drink  
 “Did Bih drink after cultivating the farm?”

In the question sentence in (2b) the verb ‘drink’ surfaces with a H tone instead of the falling contour as in the declarative sentence.

A second category of words in Bafut generally do not accept the boundary L tone. This category sub-divides again into two groups: nouns with an underlying HH tone pattern (e.g. *fórí* ‘rat’) and verbs with an underlying LH pattern (e.g. group B verbs (cf chapter 6) such as *zĩ* ‘come!’). In the final position of question sentences, words with the underlying HH pattern such as *fórí* ‘rat’ maintain their H tones (cf e.g. 3). On the other hand, words with the LH sequence surface with a final L tone in question sentences just as in ordinary declarative sentences (cf e.g. 4).

- (3) a. *ò kî fwóŋ mó sùù ká kó fórí.*  
 ò kî fwóŋ mó sùù à ká kó ø-fórí  
 you P2 say that Suh SM F0 catch 1-rat  
 “You said that Suh will catch a rat.”
- b. *ò kî fwóŋ mó sùù ká kó fórí?*  
 ò kî fwóŋ mó sùù à ká kó ø-fórí  
 you P2 say that Suh SM F0 catch 1-rat  
 “Did you say that Suh will catch a rat?”
- (4) a. *(kàá) mîlhí mjá kî wá’á zì.*  
 (kàá) mî-lhí mj-á mí kî wá’á zĩ  
 Neg 5-ants the SM P2 Neg come  
 “The ants did not come.”
- b. *(kàá) mîlhí mjá kî wá’á zì?*  
 (kàá) mî-lhí mj-á mí kî wá’á zì  
 Neg ants the SM P2 Neg come  
 “Did the ants not come?”

All of these question sentences (from (1) to (4)) are produced with a rising intonation and the rate of delivery is a lot faster in the questions than in the ordinary declarative sentences.

## 1.2. Content questions

Content questions seek information about the identity of a referent. They divide into three sub-categories following their mode of formation. These three categories are: (a) simple content questions, (b) passivised questions and (c) focused content questions. Simple content



- (6) a. *mìlù'ù mí ñgwà kì kwùrìnê.*  
 mì-lù'ù m-í ñgwà m-í kì kwùrìnê  
 6-Palm wine 6-AM Ngwa 5-SM P2 spill out  
 "Ngwa's palm wine got spilt."
- b. *àkè kì kwùrìnê?*  
 àkè á kì kwùrìnê  
 what SM P2 spill out  
 "What got spilt?"
- c. *mìlù'ù mí wò kì kwùrìnê.*  
 mì-lù'ù m-í wò m-í kì kwùrìnê  
 6-Palm wine 6-AM who 5-SM P2 spill out  
 "Whose palm wine got spilt?"
- d. ? *àkè ñgwà kì kwùrìnê?*  
 àkè H ñgwà á kì kwùrìnê  
 what AM Ngwa SM P2 spill out  
 "What of Ngwa's got spilt?"

We have used the two examples above to demonstrate that the same situation occurs whether the associative construction expresses alienable or inalienable possession or whether it is animate or inanimate. In all cases, either the entire associative construction or the modifying genitive noun alone is questioned. The situation is different in coordinate structures.

- (7) a. *ñgwà bó mbé kì fú bód.*  
 ñgwà bó àmbé bó kì fú á à-bód  
 Ngwa and Ambe they P2 go to 7-hunt  
 "Ngwa and Ambe went hunting."
- b. *ñgwà bó wò kì fú bód?*  
 ñgwà bó wò bó kì fú á à-bód  
 Ngwa and who they P2 go to 7-hunt  
 "Ngwa and who went hunting?"
- c. *wò bó mbé kì fú bód?*  
 wò bó àmbé bó kì fú á à-bód  
 who and Ambe they P2 go to 7-hunt  
 "Who and Ambe went hunting?"
- d. *bìwò kì fú bód?*  
 bìwò bí kì fú á à-bód  
 who (pl) SM P2 go to 7-hunt  
 "Who (pl) went hunting?"

As we notice, either the first or the second conjunct can be questioned. When the full coordinate structure is questioned, the questioned word is prefixed with a plural morpheme *bì* for humans (*bì-wò*) and *ì* for non-humans (*ì-kè*).

Other constituents that can be questioned using the simple constituent method are adverbials of time, place, manner and reason.

- (8) a. *àbín já ká lègìné nókè ?*

à-bîn j-á á ká lǝgìnǝ nǝ̀-ǝkè  
7-dance 7-the SM F0 begin time-what  
“When is the dance scheduled to begin?”

b. *n̄sǝ́ ɣ-ù í ká ɳì fǝ́?*

n̄-sǝ́ ɣ-ù í ká ɳì fǝ́  
1-elephant 1-this SM F0 defecate where  
“Where will this elephant defecate?”

c. *mè ká bǝ́ ñ-dâ j-ù mǝ́kǝ́?*

mè ká bǝ́ ñ-dâ j-ù mǝ́kǝ́  
I F0 build 9-house 9-this how  
“How will I build this house?”

d. *àmbé k̄ k̄m ndá jáâ já?*

àmbé à k̄ k̄mǝ́ ñ-dâ j-á já  
Ambe SM P2 demolish 9-house 9-the why  
“Why did Ambe demolish the house?”

### 1.2.2. The passivised question

The passivised question is the most natural and common means of questioning the identity of subject NPs in Bafut. This category of questions is called passivised questions because their structure is similar to that of the passive construction in Bafut. In their formation, a number of syntactic changes affect the basic SVO word order. First, in intransitive verb structures, the question is introduced by a focus marker *á* while the wh-word questioning the identity of the subject NP occurs in a position after the verb.

(9) a. *ɳù-n̄-ɳàà lé n̄zì.*

ɳù-n̄-ɳàà à lé n̄-ɳì  
Person-5- SM P3 N-come  
visit  
“A visitor came.”

b. *á lé n̄zì wó?*

á lé n̄-ɳì wó  
Foc P3 N- who  
come  
“Who came.”

In transitive verb structures, the object NP is preposed to a position before the verb while the subject wh-word is postposed after the verb. The object NP in sentence initial position is obligatorily stressed: all nouns with a prefix change the low tone of the prefix to high while nouns with a null prefix, including some nouns of class 1 whose prefixes are not clearly separable from the root (e.g. *mànɳjè* ‘woman’) are preceded by the focus marker *á*. The object NP is followed by the anaphoric definitiviser *lǝá*. Generally, the contracted form of the definitiviser (*ǝá*) is used and because of vowel deletion, only tonal changes attest to its presence in surface forms. In the following examples, we use the full form of the definitiviser for clarity.

(10) a. *mànɳjè ká t̄fwá tákwúrè wá.*



m-àŋgjà è ká tʃwá ø-tákwúrè w-á  
 1-woman SM F0 hold 1-leopard 1-the  
 “A woman will hold the leopard.”

- b. *á tákwúré wá láá kǎ tʃwá wó?*  
 á ø-tákwúrê w-á láá ká tʃwâ wò  
 Foc 1-leopard 1-the DEF F0 hold who  
 “Who will hold the leopard?”

- (11) a. *àmbé kǐ dzí nìbò’ò njá.*  
 àmbé à kǐ dzî nì-bò’ò nj-á  
 Ambe SM P2 eat 5-pumpkin 5-the  
 “Ambe ate the pumpkin.”

- b. *nìbò’ò njá láá kǐ dzí wò?*  
 nì-bò’ò nj-á láá kǐ dzî wò  
 5-pumpkin 5-the DEF P2 eat who  
 “Who ate the pumpkin?”

The same question could also be asked without preposing the object NP. In this case, the verb is repeated and the object NP comes after the second instance of the verb. In the P1 and P3 past tenses, the second instance of the verb obligatorily takes a consecutive homorganic nasal prefix.

- (12) a. *ñkìrì kǐ tʃwá ndǎŋnǐ dzâ.*  
 ñ-kìrì í kǐ tʃwâ ñ-dǎŋnî dz-á  
 1-rope SM P2 hold 9-bamboos 9-the  
 “A rope held the bamboos together.”

- b. *á kǐ tʃwâ kè nʃwá ndǎŋnǐ dzâ?*  
 á kǐ tʃwâ àkè N-tʃwâ ñ-dǎŋnî dz-á  
 Foc P2 hold what N-hold 9-bamboos 9-the  
 “What held the bamboos together?”

Questioning the subject NP in constructions with a PP is not very different from the cases illustrated in (10-12): the object NP is either preposed or it remains inside the VP while the subject wh-word is postposed after the verb. The PP is either preposed along with the object NP or it remains in its original position at the end of the sentence (in the examples that follow, the vowel of the preposition *nì* coalesces with the initial vowel of the following noun giving rise to the vowel *è*).

- (13) a. *bì kǐ lìgí nsòò wá nè sô.*  
 bì à kǐ lìgó ñ-sòò w-á nì à-só  
 Bih SM P2 cultivate 1-farm 1-the with 7-hoe  
 “Bih cultivated the farm with a hoe.”

- b. *ñsóó wá láá kǐ lìgí wò nê sô?*  
 ñ-sòò w-á láá kǐ lìgó wò ní à-só  
 1-farm 1-the DEF P2 cultivate who with 7-hoe  
 “Who cultivated the farm with a hoe?”

- c. *ńsóó wá nẹ sọ láá kị ògí wò?*  
 ñ-sòò w-á nẹ à-só láá kị ògí wò  
 1-farm 1-the with 7-hoe DEF P2 cultivate who  
 “Who cultivated the farm with a hoe?”
- d. *á kị ògí wò ògí ńsóó wá nẹ sọ?*  
 á kị ògí wò N-ògí ñ-sòò w-á nẹ à-só  
 Foc P2 cultivate who N-cultivate 1-farm 1-the with 7-hoe  
 “Who cultivated the farm with a hoe?”

The interpretation of the example in (b) in which the object NP is separated from the PP is not very different from the one in (c) where the two are not separated. In some discourse contexts such as in (14) however, it is possible to interpret the PP as a modifier of the object NP.

- (14) a. *sùù kị bọ́ ndá tú ntá'á.*  
 sùù à kị bọ́ ñ-dá á à-tú H ñ-tá'á  
 Suh SM P2 build 9-house on 7-head 7-AM 1-hill  
 “Suh built a house on a hill.”
- b. *ńdá tú ntá'á láá kị bọ́ wò?*  
 ñ-dá á à-tú H ñ-tá'á láá kị bọ́ wò  
 9-house on 7-head 7-AM 1-hill DEF P2 build who  
 “Who built a house on a hill?”

The PP in this example could be interpreted as a locative or a descriptive modifier. Thus, the question could be interpreted in two ways: (a) who built the house on the hill (as opposed to in the valley)?, (b) who built that type of a house; a house on the hill (as opposed to a house in the valley)?

### 1.2.3. The focus question

As the name implies, the formation of a focus question involves the use of a focus mechanism. Focus questions in Bafut further divide into two categories depending on the type of focus mechanism employed. These are *in situ* focus and cleft focus questions.

#### A. *In situ* focus questions

In *in situ* focus questions, the question word occupies the grammatical position (subject, object, oblique) corresponding to the constituent about whose identity information is being sought. The formation of this category of questions employs the focus particle *á* whose distribution changes with the syntactic position of the question word. If the question word is in object position, the focus particle comes immediately after the verb.<sup>1</sup> If the question word is in oblique position, the focus particle precedes the prepositional phrase, cliticising onto the preceding object NP (if there is one) or onto the verb. Subject NPs are never questioned using *in situ* focus. Following are examples of object and oblique questions.

- (15) a. *máà wá dzé'é ndóò jì.*  
 ø-máà w-á á dzé'ê ñ-dóò j-ì  
 1-grandmother 1-the SM feed 1-husband 1-her  
 “The grandmother is feeding her husband.”

<sup>1</sup> In the phonology, it actually cliticises onto the immediately preceding word.

- b. *máà wá dzé'á wò?*  
 ø-máà w-á á dzé'é á wò  
 1-grandmother the SM feed Foc who  
 "Who is the grandmother feeding?"

- (16) a. *àbàró kî dî'í mándzì mbó sùù.*  
 à-bàró á kî dî'ê ø-mándzì á ìn-bô sùù  
 7-madman SM P2 show 1-road to 6-hands Suh  
 "A madman showed Suh the way."

- b. *àbàró kî dî'í mándzìá mbó wò?*  
 à-bàró á kî dî'ê ø-mándzì á á ìn-bô wò  
 7-madman SM P2 show 1-road Foc to 6-hands who  
 "To whom did a madman show the way?"

In the surface form, the focus particle cliticises onto the verb and the phonology subsequently deletes the preposition 'to'.

Adverbials of time, manner, place and reason can also be questioned using in situ focus.

- (17) a. *màṅjè wá ká dzwíá nóòkè?*  
 m-àṅjè w-á à ká dzwî á nóòkè  
 1-woman 1-the SM F0 give birth Foc when  
 "When will the woman give birth?"

- b. *ò kî lèṣ bàà jáá fṣ?*  
 ò kî lèṣ à-bàà j-á á fṣ  
 you P2 keep 7-bag 7-the Foc where  
 "Where did you keep the bag?"

- c. *ò kî nàṅsṣ mítù wáá mṓkṓ?*  
 ò kî nàṅsṣ ø-mítù wá á mṓkṓ  
 you P2 fix 1-vehicle the Foc how  
 "How did you fix the vehicle?"

- d. *àmbê kî kùm ndá jáá já?*  
 àmbé à kî kùmṓ ñ-dâ j-á á ájá  
 Ambe SM P2 demolish 9-house the Foc why  
 "Why did Ambe demolish the house?"

The focus particle introduces emphasis of the type 'when is it that...?', 'where is it that ...?', etc. in these examples.

### B. Cleft questions

In the formation of cleft questions, the question word is transposed to the beginning of the utterance, introduced with the cleft *à ní* 'it is' which is generally contractible to simply *á*. The constituent sentence from which the question word is extracted then follows the question word introduced by the complementiser *mṓ*. All grammatical positions (subject, object, oblique) can be questioned using this method. The following examples illustrate subject, object and oblique questions.

- (18) a. *àdzòṅ já kî wṓ.*

à-dzòŋ j-á á kî wǒ  
 7-giant 7-the SM P2 fall  
 “The giant fell down.”

b. *à ní wò mǒ kî wǒ ?*  
 à ní wò mǒ à kî wǒ  
 it is who COMP SM P2 fall  
 “Who is it that fell down?”

(19) a. *tsó’ó lé mbàrí nsóó míbǎ jú.*  
 ø-tsó’ó à lé N-bàrô ñ-sóò á mì-bà j-ù  
 1-Partridge SM P3 N-carry 1-Elephant on 6-wings 6-her  
 “Partridge carried Elephant on her wings.”

b. *à ní wò mǒ tsó’ó lé mbàrǒ míbǎ jú.*  
 à ní wò mǒ ø-tsó’ó à lé N-bàrô á mì-bà j-ù  
 it is who COMP 1-Partridge SM P2 N-carry on 6-wings 6-her  
 “Who is it that Partridge carried on her wings?”

(20) a. *àmbé kî nòŋsí ñkábó mbèè ñkxì.*  
 àmbé à kî nòŋsô ñ-kábî á mbèè ñ-kxì  
 Ambe SM P2 put 9-money Prep side 1-water  
 “Ambe placed money near the stream.”

b. *à nǒ kè mǒ mbé kî nòŋsí ñkábí yú mbèè?*  
 à ní àkè mǒ àmbé à kî nòŋsô ñ-kábî yú ñbèè  
 it is what COMP Ambe SM P2 place 9-money there near  
 “What is it that Ambe placed money beside?”

In the last example, the preposition changes its form from *á* to *yú* as is usually the case when the object of a preposition is transposed. Though 80% of speakers prefer having *yú* in these examples, its presence is not very obligatory.

### 1.3 Alternative questions

Alternative questions are formed with the conjunction *kè* ‘or’ and the question particle *lé* which usually comes at the end of the sentence. This is the only situation in Bafut where a morphological question particle is used.

(21) a. *sùù ká zì kè ká nòŋ lé?*  
 sùù à ká zǐ kè à ká nòŋê lé  
 Suh SM F0 come or SM F0 sleep Q  
 “Will Suh come or will he sleep?”

b. *ò kî jǒ sùù kè bì lé?*  
 ò kî jǒ sùù kè bì lé  
 you P2 see Suh or Bih Q  
 “Who did you see, Suh or Bih?”

c. *à kî lǒá mbèè ndá kè tú tí lé?*  
 à kî lǒá á mbèè ñ-dâ kè á à-tú H à-tí lé

he/she P2 keep Prep side 9-house or Prep 7-head 7-AM tree Q  
 “Did he/she keep (it) beside the house or on a tree?”

#### 1.4 Confirmation questions

Confirmation questions are questions in which the speaker expects a ‘yes’ answer. This category of questions is formed by making an ordinary declarative statement and attaching a question tag to it. The one clear case of a question tag attested in Bafut is *á sî lá bó?* ‘is it not so?’ The question tag is separated from the rest of the utterance by a pause in speech and a comma in writing.

- (22) *ngwà kî jèrí mbà já, á sî lá bó?*  
 ngwà à kî jèrɔ̀ m̄-bà j-á, á sî lá bó  
 Ngwa SM P2 steal 9-meat 9-the it Neg so be  
 “Ngwa stole the meat, isn’t it?”

In this example, the speaker virtually forces the addressee to give an affirmative answer *ìhɔ̀* ‘yes’. A *ngáŋ* ‘no’ answer is generally unexpected except the addressee deliberately intends to taunt the speaker.

Another particle that could also be considered a question tag in Bafut is *jɛ̀* which is used in situations where the speaker is in disbelief, doubt or is requesting confirmation on a statement which he/she did not hear well. The particle *jɛ̀* translates roughly into English as ‘really?’.

- (23) *à kî mîí nsá’á já jɛ̀?*  
 à kî mîí ñ-sá’á j-á jɛ̀  
 he/she P2 swallow 9-needle 9-the really  
 “Did he/she (really) swallow the needle?”

The speaker expects a ‘yes’ answer although a ‘no’ answer could also be given where the speaker’s belief is erroneous or where the addressee intends deception.

## 2. Focus

Bafut employs four principal means to mark focus: word order, a special particle *á*, cleft sentences and pseudo cleft sentences. These formal means are mutually exclusive although they serve to mark the same kinds of focus: assertive, counter assertive, exclusive listing, etc.

### 2.1 Word order

A special constituent order, similar to that in passivised questions (see section 1.2.2) is employed to focus the subject of a sentence only. This special word order which marks assertive focus, involves postposing the subject to a position immediately after the verb. We cannot however claim here that the immediate after verb position is the position for focalised NPs as in Aghem (Watters 1979) since this position is used only in focusing subject NPs. As in the case of the passivised question, postposing the subject in an intransitive clause is accompanied by the appearance of the focus marker *á* in sentence initial position.

- (24) *á kî wǒ mfɔ̀ wá.*  
 á kî wǒ m̄-fɔ̀ w-á  
 Foc P2 fall 1-chief 1-the  
 “The person who fell is the chief.”

This sentence can be used in two contexts. First as an answer to a question such as ‘who fell?’ In this context, the speaker is simply providing information which was previously not available to the addressee. The elliptical forms *là’á mf̃ wâ* or simply *mf̃ wâ* are more often attested as answers to this question. In the elliptical form, *là’á* substitutes the preceding part of the sentence “*The person who fell is ...*” The second context in which the sentence in (24) can be used marks contrastive focus in which the speaker intends to correct an erroneous belief held by the addressee. Thus consider the following exchange between speaker and addressee:

- (25) a. *bì k̃i yèé mítáá.*  
 bì à k̃i yèé á m̃i-tàà  
 Bih SM P2 go to 6-market  
 “Bih went to the market.”
- b. *(ηγάη) á k̃i yèé mf̃ wâ.*  
 (ηγάη) á k̃i yèé m̃-f̃ w-á  
 (no) DS P2 go 1-chief 1-the  
 “(No), it is the chief who went.”

In transitive sentences, when the subject is postposed, the object can either be preposed to a position before the verb or the entire VP (containing the object) is repeated after the postposed subject. In the former case, the preposed object is preceded by a focus particle *á* if the object noun is prefixless. Nouns with clearly distinct prefixes are stressed (stress in this case is symbolised by a high tone on the noun prefix which otherwise bears a low tone). In both cases, the preposed object NP is followed by the definitiviser *láá* which often occurs when an NP is preposed. From the facts of this context, one can assume that the enclitic *láá* also has a defocalising or backgrounding function.

- (26) a. *sùù k̃i jùú lóηó wâ.*  
 sùù à k̃i yúú ø-lóηó w-á  
 Suh SM P2 buy 1-horse 1-the  
 “Suh bought the horse.”
- b. *á lóηó wá láá k̃i jùú sùù.*  
 á ø-lóηó w-á láá k̃i jùú sùù  
 Foc 1-horse 1-the DEF P2 buy Suh  
 “The horse was bought by Suh.”
- (27) a. *nìbà’á k̃i kwùrí f̃ndzós f̃já.*  
 nìbà’á à k̃i kwùrí f̃i-ndzós f̃j-á  
 Niba SM P2 eat 19-frog 19-the  
 “Niba ate the frog.”
- b. *f̃ndzós f̃já láá k̃i kwùrí nìbà’á.*  
 f̃i-ndzós f̃j-á láá k̃i kwùrí nìbà’á  
 19-frog 19-the DEF P2 eat Niba  
 “The frog was eaten by Niba.”

In the second case where the object NP is not transposed, the verb is repeated after the postposed subject. If the utterance is in the past tense, the second instance of the verb bears a homorganic nasal prefix of the type attested in consecutive clauses.

- (28) a. *á kî jèrɛ́ fɔ́rɛ́ njɛ́rɛ́ mûndzù wá.*  
 á kî jèrɛ́ ø-fɔ́rɛ́ N-jèrɛ́ ø-mú-ndzù w-á  
 DS P2 steal rat N-steal 1-child-peanut the  
 “The peanuts were stolen by a rat.”
- b. *á ká jèrɛ́ fɔ́rɛ́ jèrɛ́ mûndzù wá.*  
 á ká jèrɛ́ ø-fɔ́rɛ́ jèrɛ́ ø-mú-ndzù w-á  
 DS F0 steal 1-rat N-steal 1-child-peanut 1-the  
 “The peanuts will be stolen by a rat.”

While the interpretation of the sentences remains more or less the same whether the object NP remains in situ or is preposed, the context in which the utterances are used differ. Utterances with the preposed object NP are used in contexts of assertive focus (i.e. where the speaker is simply providing information which was previously not available to the addressee). Their counterparts in which the object remains inside the VP are used in contexts of contrastive focus reference to correct an erroneous belief held by the addressee. Thus in (26 & 27), the speaker provides new information that the action was performed by X while in (28), the speaker emphasises that the action was done by X and not Y.

## 2.2 The focus particle *á*

While the special constituent order plus the focus marker *á* is used to focus subjects only, the focus particle strategy is used to mark focus on object and oblique NPs. This strategy is employed predominantly to mark contrastive focus. In the construction, the focus particle generally occurs to the immediate left of the focused object NP. In the phonology, it (the focus particle) cliticises onto the immediately preceding word.

- (29) *m̄f̄ wá kî fiá b̄r̄è j̄í.*  
 m̄-f̄ w-á à kî fiá á à-b̄r̄è j-ì  
 1-chief the SM P2 sell Foc 7-throne 7-his  
 “The chief sold his throne (and not his drinking horn for example).”

If, on the other hand, the focused constituent is the object of a preposition, the focused particle occurs to the left of the entire prepositional phrase.

- (30) *m̄ kî wǎ tì júá n̄i múnwí.*  
 m̄ kî wǎ à-tì j-ú á n̄i ø-mú-nwí  
 I P2 fell 7-tree 7-this Foc with 1-child-cutlass  
 “I fell this tree with a knife (and not an axe).”

## 2.3 Cleft focus

Cleft sentences are used to mark a variety of sentence constituents for counter assertive focus. The cleft sentence *à ní* (or its contracted form *ǎ*) occurs at the beginning of the entire construction followed by the focused constituent. The sentence from which the focused constituent is extracted then follows introduced by the complementiser *m̄ɔ́*. Following is an example of subject focus.

- (31) *ǎ síŋ m̄ɔ́ kî wùrí ndá jì fáà.*

à ní ø-síŋ mɔ́ à kɪ wùrî ñ-dâ j-ì fáà  
 it is 1-bird COMP SM P2 build 9-house 9-its here  
 “It is a bird that built its nest here.”

The focused subject leaves behind a subject marker at the original subject position. In the example in (31), the general vowel deletion rule eliminates the subject marker left behind by the moved subject NP. If the focused constituent is the object NP, it leaves behind an optional resumptive pronoun only if it is human. Non-human objects do not leave behind a resumptive pronoun.

(32) a. *ǎ bílǐbá mɔ́ bì'ì kɪ j̥ (jí).*  
 à ní ø-bílǐbá mɔ́ bì'ì kɪ j̥ (jí)  
 it is 1-blacksmith COMP we P2 see (him)  
 “It is a blacksmith that we saw/what we saw was a blacksmith.”

b. *ǎ tì mɔ́ bì kɪ wǎ.*  
 à ní à-tì mɔ́ bì à kɪ wǎ  
 it is 7-tree COMP Bih SM P2 fell  
 “It is a tree that Bih fell.”

Oblique objects equally do not leave behind a resumptive pronoun per se. Rather, the simple prepositions *á* and *ní* change to *γú*. Body parts which combine with *á* to form complex prepositions remain intact.

(33) a. *sùù kɪ kò'ɔ́ ηγèè wúsáá.*  
 sùù à kɪ kò'ɔ́ N-γèé á à-wúsáà  
 Suh SM P2 climb N-go to 7-city  
 “Suh went up to the city.”

b. *ǎ wúsáá mɔ́ sùù kɪ kò'ɔ́ ηγèè γú*  
 à ní à-wúsáà mɔ́ sùù à kɪ kò'ɔ́ N-γèé γú  
 it is 7-city COMP Suh SM P2 climb N-go there  
 “It is the city that Suh went to.”

(34) a. *bì kɪ n̄ŋ mbì já múm ηkjè.*  
 bì à kɪ n̄ŋ ñ-bì j-á á múm ñ-kjè  
 Bih SM P2 put 9-goat 9-the Prep inside 9-basket  
 “Bih put the goat in a basket.”

b. *ǎ ηkjè mɔ́ bì kɪ n̄ŋ mbí já γú múm.*  
 à ní ñ-kjè mɔ́ bì à kɪ n̄ŋ m-bì j-á γú múm  
 it is 9-basket COMP Bih SM P2 put 9-goat 9-the there inside  
 “It is a basket that Bih put the goat inside.”

Considering examples like (33b) above, the claim could be made that *γú* is a sort of resumptive pronoun left behind by the moved oblique object. This claim is however not very tenable given examples like (34b) in which *γú* does not appear in the grammatical position of the oblique object. In addition to this, *γú* also surfaces, though optionally, in constructions in which the entire PP, and not just the oblique NP, has been moved (see example (35) below).

The entire prepositional phrase can also be focused via clefting as the example below shows.



- (35) *ǎ múm ñkjè mǎ bì kì ññj mbí jâ.*  
 à ní á múm ñ-kjè mǎ bì à kì níñjê ñ-bí j-á yú  
 it is Prep inside 9-basket COMP Bih SM P2 put 9-goat 9-the there  
 “It is in a basket that Bih put the goat.”

In addition to NPs and PPs, verbs can also be focused via clefting. In this case, the focused verb occurs in the nominalised form while a copy of the basic form remains at the original verb position.

- (36) *ǎ ndòrǎ mǎ mfð wá ká dórê*  
 à ní n-dórê mǎ ñ-fð w-á à ká dórê  
 it is N-playing COMP 1-chief 1-the SM F0 play  
 “It is playing that the chief will play.”

The initial syllable of the nominalised verb always bears a low tone as is expected of every nominalised verb in the language.

Before ending this section on cleft focus, it is worth mentioning that the use of cleft constructions in general are not very common in the language. In fact, some native speakers will consider most of the examples in this section as odd given that such utterances are not very common in day-to-day speech.

#### 2.4 Pseudo-cleft focus

The pseudo-cleft sentence consists of a noun followed by a relative clause. The relative clause is then followed by the cleft sentence *à ní* ‘it is’ and the focused constituent comes after the cleft. Following are examples of a variety of pseudo-cleft focus constructions.

- (37) a. *ñtǎmbì ñù jì ká zì láá ní ñgwà.*  
 ñ-tǎmbì ñ-ù y-ì à ká zì láá à ní ñgwà  
 1-pass-front 1-person 1-pron SM F0 come DEF it is Ngwa  
 “The first person to come will be Ngwa.”
- b. *ájóó jì ñgwà kì jùú láá ní mǎ-lù’ù.*  
 à-jóó j-ì ñgwà à kì jùú láá à ní mǎ-lù’ù  
 7-thing 7-Pron Ngwa SM P2 buy DEF it is 6-palm wine  
 “The thing that Ngwa bought was palm wine.”
- c. *ñù jì ò kì fǎ yú mbó láá ní bì.*  
 ñ-ù j-ì ò kì fǎ yú ñ-bó láá à ní bì  
 1-person 1-Pron you P2 give there 9-hands DEF it is Bih  
 “The person to whom you gave it is Bih.”
- d. *ñòò jì sùù kì ló láá ní ñkwéfð.*  
 ø-ñòò j-ì sùù à kì ló láá à ní ñkwéfð  
 1-time 1-Pron Suh SM P2 leave DEF it is evening  
 “The time when Suh left was in the evening.”

The presence of the definitiviser *láá* is obligatory in these pseudo-cleft focus constructions. In rapid speech, it can be contracted to its simple form *áá*. This contracted form surfaces all the time even when the preceding word ends in a vowel.

#### Conclusion

An outstanding fact about the description in this chapter is the similarity between content question formation and focus marking. For instance, in both construction types, the questioned constituent and the focused constituent can occur in situ; marked by rising intonation or a preceding emphatic marker, both constituents can occur in a cleft, both receive primary and secondary stress, etc. These similarities exhibited by both construction types have led to various discussions in generative circles leading to the conclusion that both constructions are sub-parts of the same process in syntax. In the next chapter (chapter 11), we will indicate that in this respect, relative clause formation can also belong in this category of processes. We will however not explore the details of the relationship between content question formation, focus marking and relativisation since this is more a line of inquiry in generative linguistics than in descriptive linguistics.

## Chapter 11 Complex constructions

### Introduction

The chapter examines the structure of what is commonly called complex constructions which are understood here as phrases and clauses with more than one syntactic unit which have been joined together either via coordination, serialisation or subordination. Essentially the chapter describes (i) the markers of coordination, their syntactic distribution, context of use and the effect that coordinators and subordinators have on other constituents of the construction, (ii) the different forms of subordination and their distinctive features as well as the relationship between tense/aspect and subordination in Bafut and (iii) the distinguishing features of serialisation and consecutivisation in Bafut.

### 1. Coordination

Like many other languages, Bafut employs two major strategies to conjoin phrases and clauses. These are the overt strategy where the conjuncts of the coordinate structure are united by an overt coordinating conjunction and the covert strategy where the conjuncts are not united by any overt coordinating conjunction. Only commas (in writing) and pauses (in speech) are used to separate the two conjuncts. Each coordination strategy imposes various restrictions on the use of tense and aspect markers as well as on the syntactic categories that can be coordinated.

#### 1.1. The covert strategy

Covert co-ordination occurs when two or more phrases/clauses are juxtaposed without any explicit connecting word, but the sentence is interpreted as possessing a conjunction. The covert strategy is used mostly to conjoin clauses/sentences characterised by the absence of an overt tense marker in the second and subsequent conjuncts.

- (1) a. *m̀f̀um lé tsí wùgíndá, ìbà'á tsí tí tsítì.*  
 m̀- f̀um    ì    lé N-tsí    á    à-wùgè-ndâ,    ì-bà'á    dzí    tsí    tí    tsítì  
 9-moss    SM P3 N-be    on 7-wall-house    8-doors SM be Neg shut  
 “There was mould on the walls and the doors were not shut.”
- b. *bú'ú tígì mbú'ú bwíí ñkàà yèè ñjèrí nìngòò.*  
 bú'ú    á    tígì N-bú'ú    ø-bwíí    ñ-kàà    á    yèé á    N-jèrê    nì-ñgòò  
 1-baboon SM then N-clear    1-straw    9-monkey SM go to N-steal banana  
 “Baboon then harvested straw and Monkey went to steal bananas.”
- c. *bú'ú k̀ jùú ñgòò, tsó'ó kóó nìbàñ, ñkàà jèrí ndzâñ.*  
 ø-bú'ú    à    k̀ jùú    ñ-gòò    ø-tsó'ó    á    kóó    nì-bàñ    ñ-kàà    á    jèrê    ñ-dzâñ  
 1-baboon SM P2 buy 9-drum 1-partridge SM make flute monkey SM steal 10-xyloph.  
 “Baboon bought a drum, Partridge made a flute and Monkey stole xylophones.”

At first sight, it appears the events of both clausal conjuncts are related but a closer look reveals that there is no requirement for the events of the different conjuncts to be related. In (1a) for instance, moss growing on the wall has no relationship with the doors remaining open except that both states are characteristic of the same house. The fact that the second and subsequent clauses depend on the first for tense marking however establishes a temporal relationship between the events. If the second or subsequent clausal conjunct has an overt tense marker, the interpretation that results is that of two independent clauses having a

(sequential) reading of two events which may be unrelated and not a coordinate reading even if the tenses are identical.

- (2) *ɲkàà kɪ bù'ú ɲgòò, nàà dzjá kɪ bìnô.*  
 ɲ-kàà à kɪ bù'ú ɲ-gòò n-àà dzj-á jí kɪ bìnô  
 9-monkey SM P2 play 9-drum 9-animals 9-the SM P2 dance  
 “Monkey played a drum, the animals danced.”

In this example, although the events in the two clauses are quite obviously related and can be interpreted as occurring in a temporal sequence, the presence of the tense marker in the second conjunct separates them entirely. The fact that the animals danced is not in any way related to the monkey playing a drum. There is no indication of a temporal or even spatial relationship between the two events. In other words, the monkey could have played the drum in scene A at time 1 while the animals danced in scene B at time 2.

Coordinating interrogative and negative clauses using the covert strategy is also possible although not frequently attested. In negative sentences, the verb as usual is positioned at the final position of each clause. In the example of the interrogatives below, interrogation is marked by a rise in intonation. See chapter 10 for other ways of marking interrogation.

- (3) a. *m̀bí kɪ kwúrì ɲgèè, ɲgwú kwúrô nsáj?*  
 m̀-bí ì kɪ kwúrô ɲ-gèè ɲ-gwú í kwúrô ø-ànsáj  
 9-goat SM P2 eat 9-grass 9-chicken SM eat 1-corn  
 “Did a goat eat grass and a chicken corn?”
- b. *(kàá) ɲkàà kɪ wá'á mfô dí'ítì, (kàá) ɲà wá'à mú kwétì.*  
 (kàâ) ɲkàà ì kɪ wá'â mfô dí'ítô (kàâ) ɲà á wá'â mú kwétô  
 Neg monkey SM P2 Neg chief advise Neg mosq. SM Neg child help  
 “Monkey did not advise a chief and Mosquito did not help a child.”

Coordinating phrases, as opposed to clauses, using the covert strategy produces very marginal results at best. In terms of both the verb morphology of the second conjunct and the overall distribution of constituents, there is no difference between a coordinated VP construction and a consecutive clause. Consider the example below in which the second verb takes a nasal prefix identical to the consecutive marker in ordinary consecutive clauses.

- (4) *jéésò lé ɲkòɲ nòò, ndí'ítí ɲgǎɲjógínù dzí.*  
 jéésò à lé N-kòɲ ì-nòò N-dí'ító ɲ-gǎɲjógínù dz-ì  
 Jesus SM P3 N-love 8-crowds N-advise 1-person-learn-thing 8-his  
 “Jesus loved crowds and advised his disciples.”

Although the events in the two verb phrases can hardly be considered as being united in a sequential relationship (the events do not exhibit any logical succession), it is more felicitous to interpret this construction as a consecutive clause rather than a coordinated VP construction.

The covert strategy is never used to coordinate two noun phrases. At best, it can be used in a situation where more than two nouns occur in a series. Even in this case, the covert strategy cannot be used to coordinate all the nouns in the series. The last two nouns must be coordinated with an overt conjunction.

- (5) a. *bú'ú, tsó'ó ní ɲkàà lé ɲjós kòó ndânwì.*

ø-bú'ú ø-tsó'ó ní ñ-kàà bó lé N-jóô ì-kòò á ñ-dánwì  
 1-baboon 1-partridge and 9-monkey SM P3 N-sing 3-song in 9-church  
 “Baboon, Partridge and Monkey sang a song in church.”

- b. *mè kì jùú mbà, nìngdò, mìkúú nì fìngwâŋ*  
 mè kì jùú m-bà nì-ŋgòò m-kúú nì fì-ŋwâŋ  
 I P2 buy 9-meat 5-plantains 6-beans and 19-salt  
 “I bought meat, plantains, beans and salt.”

Considering the marginal results obtained from VP and NP coordination above, it seems then that using the covert coordination strategy in Bafut is limited to sentences only. The overt strategy is a lot more extensive and covers a wider variety of constructions as we see in the following section.

## 1.2. The overt strategy

Bafut has many overt markers which permit various types of coordination to occur at the phrasal as well as the sentential level, thereby forming complex phrases of various grammatical categories. All of the morphemes are sensitive to syntactic categories as none of them is used ubiquitously, like English ‘and’, to conjoin sentences, verb phrases, adjectival phrases, prepositional phrases and noun phrases. Rather, the morphemes divide into two sets, one used exclusively to conjoin sentences, verb phrases and adjectival phrases and the other used to conjoin noun phrases and limited instances of prepositional phrases.

### A. The coordinator *kí*

The coordinator *kí* has two forms: *ŋkí* used in the past tenses and *kî* used in the future tenses. This coordinator is used to conjoin verb phrases and predicative adjectival phrases. It is rarely used to conjoin sentences and never used at all to conjoin prepositional phrases or noun phrases. Morphologically, *kí* exhibits some characteristics of a deficient verb as it regularly provokes the occurrence of a homorganic nasal consonant on following verbs in past tenses. Also, *kí* has two forms; one (*kí*) used in past tenses and the other (*kî*) used in future tenses. In this section, we focus on its function as a coordinator (see chapter 8 for its role as a deficient verb). Following are examples in which *kí* is employed to conjoin verb phrases. In the future tense, the coordinator is

- (6) a. *bìsín bjá kì kwùrê nsán wá ŋkí ñsí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sín bj-á bí kì kwùrê ø-ànsán w-á N-kí N-shí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM P2 eat 1-corn 1-the N-and N-wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds ate the corn and bathed themselves.”
- b. *bú'ú yú káló yèé ndánwì kî fì'í tsò'ó dzí.*  
 ø-bú'ú y-ú à káló yèé á ñ-dâ-nwì kî fì'í ì-tsò'ò dz-ì  
 1-baboon 1-this SM F2 go to 9-house-God and wash clothes its  
 “This baboon will go to church and wash his clothes.”

The morpheme *kí* serves to coordinate two events or states that exhibit some similarity in general topic or structure. The events are related; related in the sense that the second event is carried out as an addition to the first while the second state exists along side the first. Thus, the most appropriate translation for the examples in (6) would be ‘the birds ate corn and in addition, bathed themselves’, and ‘this baboon will go to church and also wash his clothes.’ This interpretation makes coordinate structures marked by *kí* very similar to the consecutive

construction. However, whereas the order of the physical events strictly follows the ordering of the verbs in the consecutive construction, the order of occurrence of the physical events in the coordinate structure is free.

The interpretation of the *kí* coordinator as generally including the adverbial notion ‘additionally/also’ is very evident when the coordinator is used to conjoin predicative adjectives as in (7a) and clauses as in (7b) below.

- (7) a. *mìdʒí mjá wá dígə níj’ó kî bəŋ ŋkí ŋyá’á.*  
 mìdʒí mjá wá àdìgì níj’ó’ò mí kî bəŋə N-kí N-yá’á  
 food the at place marriage SM P2 nice and much  
 “The food at the wedding was nice and plentiful.”
- b. *bìfí lé ntónə mândʒì, mánkù kí njúú mítù.*  
 bì-fí bí lé N-tónə ø-mándʒì mánkù kí N-júú ø-mítù  
 2-Bafuts SM P3 N-dig 1-road Mankons and N-buy food  
 “The Bafuts constructed a road and the Mankons bought a car.”

In (7a), in addition to being nice, the food was in plenty while in (7b), in addition to various achievements such as the Bafuts constructing a road, the Mankons bought a car. The example in (7b) is a special case. While the translation leaves one with the impression that two clauses have been coordinated, the distribution of the coordinator shows that the conjuncts are verb phrases. The coordinator comes after the subject of the second clause and not before it as we would have expected if this were a case of clausal coordination. In order to coordinate the two clauses in this example, the covert strategy which simply juxtaposes the sentences would be used.

In verb phrase coordination which uses an overt marker, just like clausal coordination which employs the covert strategy, only the first conjunct is marked for tense. The second is not marked for tense although it is interpreted as if it were marked in the same manner as the first. This pattern of tense marking affects both verb phrase and predicative adjectival coordination.

### B. The coordinator *tâ*

The morpheme *tâ* is the only coordinator in Bafut that unites different clauses. It expresses the meaning ‘while’ and is used almost exclusively in the future tense.

- (8) a. *ŋgwà kálǒ tú’ú ŋkxì tá bì láá míjî.*  
 ŋgwà à káló tú’ú ñ-kxì tá bì á láà mì-dʒí  
 Ngwa SM F2 fetch 1-water while Bih SM cook 6-food  
 “Ngwa will fetch water while Bih will cook food.”
- b. *ŋgwà kálǒ kí tú’ú ŋkxì tá bì ká nláá mídʒî.*  
 ŋgwà à káló kí tú’ú ñ-kxì tá bì á ká N-láà mì-dʒí  
 Ngwa SM F2 Asp fetch 1-water while Bih SM Asp N-cook 6-food  
 “Ngwa will be fetching water while Bih will be cooking food.”

As in the preceding cases of verb phrase and clausal coordination, only the first conjunct is marked for tense. Aspect can however be marked on both conjuncts as the second example shows. Notice that the form of the aspectual marker is not the same for the two clauses. In the second clause, the progressive morpheme is *ká* (*kí* in the first) and it provokes a homorganic nasal consonant on the following verb.

### C. The coordinator *kə*

The morpheme *kə* is a marker of disjunction. It is the unmarked form of disjunction which functions to stress that the conjuncts are to be considered as separate units, despite their syntactic linking. *kə* generally translates into English as ‘or’. To express the marked disjunction ‘either...or’, *kə* is repeated before the first conjunct. Where there are more than two conjuncts, the coordinating particle is generally repeated between each of them as well as initially before the first conjunct. The effect of such repetition is, however, emphatic and does not alter the semantic properties of the coordination.

- (9) a. *bì káló tú'ú ñkxì kə láá mídzî.*  
 bì à káló tú'ú ñ-kxì kə láà mî-dzî  
 Bih SM F2 fetch 1-water or cook 6-food  
 “Bih will either fetch water or cook food.”
- b. *kə bîfð bjá bíínì kə bîsógjè kúú yû*  
 kə bî-fð bj-á b-í bîñnê kə bî-sógjè kúú yû  
 either 2-chiefs 2-the 2-SM agree or 2-soldiers enter there  
 “Either the chiefs agree/reach an agreement or soldiers intervene.”
- c. *kə mîlù'ù mjá lî kə mí lwî kə mí ñwágô.*  
 kə mî-lù'ù mj-á m-í lî kə m-í lwî kə m-í ñwágô  
 Either 6-palm wine 6-the 6-SM sweet or 6-SM bitter or 6-SM sour  
 “Either the palm wine is sweet, bitter or sour.”

In clausal coordination, the subject is repeated in subsequent clauses only when different actors are involved (see (9b)). Otherwise, where the actor is the same, the subject is not repeated in subsequent verb phrases (9a) or is simply marked by the subject marker in subsequent predicative adjectival phrases (9c). The subject marker could also simply be omitted in the second and third conjuncts. In this case, the adjectival predicates are preceded by the homorganic nasal consonant. Thus the example in (9c) could be rendered thus:

- c. *kə mîlù'ù mjá lî kə n lwî kə ñwágô.*  
 kə mî-lù'ù mj-á mí lî kə n-lwî kə ñwágô  
 Either 6-palm wine 6-the SM sweet or N-bitter or sour  
 “Either the palm wine is sweet, bitter or sour.”

In noun phrase coordination, *kə* is normally used to conjoin only two NPs. If there are more than two NPs, repeating the coordinator is necessary only for emphatic purposes otherwise the first series of NPs are simply juxtaposed and *kə* is inserted between the last two.

- (10) a. *bí ká tsó'ó ñjèrô wá kə m-àngjè wá.*  
 bí ká tsó'ó ñ-jèrô w-á kə m-àngjè w-á  
 they F0 elect 1-thief the or 1-woman 1-the  
 “The thief or the woman will be elected.”
- b. *m-àngjè wá, mú wá kə nyèrô wá ká dzî ní-fð*  
 m-àngjè w-á m-û w-á kə ñ-jèrô wá à ká dzî ní-fð  
 1-woman 1-the 1-child 1-the or 1-thief 1-the SM F0 eat 5-chieftaincy

“The woman, the child or the thief will win the chieftaincy.”

c. *m̄f̄ ò ká f̄ n̄f̄ur̄ mbó tsó’ó k̄ (mbó) ñkùm.*

m̄-f̄ ò ká f̄ n̄-f̄ur̄ á m̄-bô ø-tsó’ó k̄ á (m̄bô) ñ-kùm  
 1-chief SM F0 give 5-feather to hands 1-adviser or to hands 1-noble  
 “The chief will decorate/honour an adviser or a noble.”

#### D. The coordinator *lá*

The coordinator *lá* specifies that a contrast exists between two conjuncts, or between the implications of the conjuncts. Because of the very nature of contrast itself, the number of conjuncts is limited to two. This coordinator is used in three distinct ways: (i) to express a contrast in the interpretation of two conjuncts, (ii) to indicate a pragmatic contradiction in expectations and (iii) to provide explanations for unfulfilled intentions.

In the first case (i.e. expressing contrast in interpretations), the use of *lá* indicates that the events or states in the two conjuncts are in opposition. At the sentential level, the events/states are generally similar in topic and structure, but different in content.

(11) a. *mbó ò b̄ḡit̄ó yá, ò j̄ò’ó, lá m̄ b̄ t̄akw̄j̄è.*

mbó ò b̄ḡit̄ó yá ò j̄ò’ó lá m̄ b̄ ø-t̄akw̄è  
 COND you insult me you marry but I be 1-bachelor  
 “(yes), you can insult me, (after all) you are married but I am a bachelor.”

b. *n̄ f̄a’á ñkáb̄ w̄usáá lá bì’í líḡí m̄d̄z̄í f̄f̄.*

n̄ f̄a’á ñ-káb̄ á à-w̄usáá lá bì’í líḡí m̄-d̄z̄í á f̄f̄  
 you work 9-money in 7-city but we cultivate 6-food in Bafut  
 “You make the money in the city but we grow the food in Bafut (village).”

In the second case involving a pragmatic contradiction in expectations, the coordinator is used to express the idea that given the event/state in the first conjunct, it might be expected that the situation in the second conjunct will not hold, but nevertheless, it holds. This case is illustrated in (11c) below.

c. *kwímán̄k̄ò’ò n̄ ñù m̄t̄f̄è lá m̄b̄índz̄èr̄i ká yá’á j̄í.*

ø-kwímán̄k̄ò’ò á n̄ ñ-ù m̄-t̄f̄è lá m̄-b̄índz̄èr̄i ì ká yá’á j̄í  
 1-Tortoise SM be 1-person 6-sense but 9-sheep SM F0 defeat him  
 “Tortoise is an intelligent person but Sheep will defeat him.”

In this example, Tortoise is considered an intelligent animal (in folktales) and so it might have been expected that he will always win in every situation. However, Sheep (an animal associated with stupidity) will defeat Tortoise this time around. In pragmatic contradictions of this type, there is no need for any similarity in general topic or structure between the conjuncts themselves.

In the last case concerning explanations for unfulfilled intentions, the event/state in the first conjunct would otherwise take place were it not for the situation in the second conjunct. The first conjunct is usually a hypothetical condition and so the use of the conditional mood marker *mbó*.

(12) *mbó mb̄é j̄ó’ó ts̄its̄òŋ lá (k̄àá) s̄ì n̄ ñkáb̄í ts̄í.*

mbó àmbé á j̄ó’ó ts̄its̄òŋ lá (k̄àá) à s̄ì n̄ ñ-káb̄í ts̄í  
 COND Ambe SM marry now but Neg SM Neg with 9-money stay  
 “Ambe can marry now (is old enough to) but he does not have money.”



### E. The coordinator *ní*

The conjunction *ní* is identical to the preposition coding the comitative and instrumental meaning ‘with’. However, devices exist for telling a coordinate structure from a comitative or instrumental construction. Two NPs separated by *ní* in subject position always have a coordinate interpretation. In the comitative or instrumental interpretation, the second NP is restricted to occurring after the verb in a prepositional phrase structure. In addition to this distributional difference, the coordinate NP in subject NP is always followed by a plural subject marker.

- (13) a. *mbé mbí nì nìngdò kúú wá bàà já.* (coordinate interpretation)  
 mbé m-bí ní nì-ηgòò kúú wá à-bàà já  
 COND 9-goat and 5-plantain enter into 7-bag the  
 “A goat and a bunch of plantains can fit into the bag.”
- b. *mbé mbí kúú wá bàà ní nìngdò.* (Comitative interpretation)  
 mbé m-bí í kúú wá à-bàà ní nì-ηgòò  
 COND 9-goat SM enter into 7-bag with 5-plantain  
 “A goat can fit into the bag along with a bunch of plantains.”

The coordinate NP in (a) is followed by the plural subject marker *bí*. Compare this with the singular subject marker *í* in (b).

In object position, it is rather difficult to distinguish a coordinate structure from a comitative or instrumental construction. Contextual factors, and at times the tone on the particle *ní* can help determine whether *ní* is used as a coordinator or a comitative/instrumental preposition. Generally, this particle bears a high tone when marking coordination and a low tone when marking the comitative/instrumental. This tone test is, to say the least, very unreliable as a way of telling coordinate structures from comitative/instrumental constructions because of the influence of neighbouring tones which is quite extensive in Bafut.

In the oblique position, two NPs separated by *ní* can only have a coordinate reading. The comitative/instrumental is never used in this position.

In addition to linking full lexical nouns, *ní* can also be used to link a noun and a pronoun as well as two pronouns. Following is a table showing examples of various combinations of pronouns that can be linked by *ní*. The table also contains the subject markers that the illustrated coordinate NPs in the subject position will take.

Table I: Coordinate pronouns with *ní*

Subject position			Object position		Oblique position	
Pronouns	SM	Gloss	Pronouns	Gloss	Pronouns	Gloss
<i>mè ní wò</i>	<i>sì</i>	‘I and you (sg)’	<i>yá ní yò</i>	‘I and you’	<i>mè ní wò</i>	‘I and you (sg)’
<i>mè ní jù</i>	<i>bì`ì</i>	‘I and him/her’	<i>yá ní jù</i>	‘I and him’	<i>mè ní jù</i>	‘I and him/her’
<i>mè ní bù</i>	<i>bí`ínà</i>	‘I and you (pl)’	<i>yá nì bù</i>	‘I and you pl’	<i>mè ní bù</i>	‘I and you (pl)’
<i>wò ní mè</i>	<i>sì</i>	‘you and I’	<i>yó ní mè</i>	‘you and I’	<i>wò ní mè</i>	‘you and I’
<i>wò ní bù</i>	<i>bù</i>	‘you sg and you’	<i>yó ní bù</i>	‘you and you’	<i>wò ní bù</i>	‘you sg and you pl’

		pl'				
<i>wò ní bô</i>	bù	'you and they'	<i>yó ní bô</i>	'you and them'	<i>wò ní bô</i>	'you and they'
<i>jú ní wò</i>	bù	'he/she and you'	<i>jí ní wò</i>	s/he and you	<i>jú ní wò</i>	'he/she and you'
<i>jú ní bì'ì</i>	bì'ì	'he/she and us'	<i>jí ní bì'ì</i>	s/he and us'	<i>jú ní bì'ì</i>	'he/she and us'
<i>jú ní bô</i>	bô	'he/she and they'	<i>jí ní bô</i>	's/he and them'	<i>jú ní bô</i>	'he/she and they'

Notice that the second pronominal conjunct is always in the oblique case. For example, in the second example in subject position, while *mə̀* is in the nominative case, *jú* is in the oblique case. In object position, *yá* is in the accusative case form and *jú* again is the oblique form. In the oblique position itself, both pronouns are in the oblique case form. See chapter 4 for details on the nominative, accusative and oblique case forms of pronouns.

#### F. The coordinator *bó*

The coordinator *bó* functions, along side *ní* presented immediately above, to link NPs. Ordinarily, *bó* is the third person plural pronoun 'they' in Bafut and when used as a coordinator, it indicates the number and person of the conjoined NP. In this usage, *bó* serves as a link, adding no further information, between two already fully specified conjuncts. Following are some examples of this usage.

- (14) a. *bú'ú bó ñkàà bó tígì ndí'ítí bífḽ bjâ.*

ø-bú'ú bó ñ-kàà bó tígì N-dí'ítê bì-fḽ bj-á  
 1-baboon and 9-monkey they then N-advise 2-chiefs 2-the  
 "Baboon and Monkey then advised the chiefs."

- b. *sógjè wá kî tá tîrî já bó mbwìnkî wá.*

ø-sógjè w-á à kî tâ à-tîrî j-á bó m-bwìnkî w-á  
 1-soldier 1-the SM P2 kick 7-fool 7-the and 1-lame person 1-the  
 "The soldier kicked the fool and the lame person."

- c. *mḽ wá kî fá dà'à mbô kíkó'ó bó mḽ'èni.*

m-fḽ w-á à kî fá à-dà'à á m-bô à-kíkó'ò bó m-fḽ'èni  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 give 7-power to 6-hands 7-dumb pers and 1-blind pers  
 "The chief gave authority to a dumb person and a blind person."

In the example in (14a), the subject coordinate NP takes the subject concord marker *bó* which is different from the *bí* which ordinary plural (non coordinate) nouns take in this position. However, it is worth mentioning that *bí* can also be used after coordinate NPs like 'Baboon and Monkey' in this example above.

It is also worth pointing out that *bó* can assume a comitative function expressing the meaning 'together with'. Thus the example in (14b) can also mean 'the soldier kicked the fool together with the lame person'.

In addition to linking full lexical nouns, *bó*, like *ní* can also be used to link a noun and a pronoun as well as two pronouns. In table I above, substituting *ní* for *bó* is perfectly accepted and the interpretation of the coordinate structures does not change. The two coordinators *bó* and *ní* are therefore very similar and are, at times interchangeable. It is only in very restricted contexts that *bó* can be used where *ní* cannot. In the examples we have seen so far, *bó* generally serves as a link between two nouns, between a noun and a pronoun or

between two pronouns. In this respect, *bó* and *ní* are very similar and can even be used interchangeably. *bó* is however unique in assuming the combined functions of both a coordinator and a pronoun. Thus we find structures such as *bó N* and *bó pro* where *bó* precedes a noun or a pronoun but the meaning we get is one of *pro bó N* or *pro bó pro* where *bó* serves as a link between a pronoun and a noun or another pronoun.

- (15) a. *bô mbé kî dzwî mû.*  
 bó àmbé bó kî dzwî m-û  
 they Ambe SM P2 give birth child  
 “She and Ambe made a baby.”
- b. *bó jú kî tsè’é ñkwàà.*  
 bó jú bó kî tsè’é ñ-kwàà  
 they him/her SM P2 make 9-agreement  
 “She and he betted.”

This usage is, however, restricted to the third person singular pronoun. It is also interesting to note that a number of other Bafut pronouns are also used in structures like (15) with a coordination meaning. Here are some examples.

- (16) a. *bùú mbé kî fwónô bãñónù.*  
 bùú àmbé bù kî fwónô à-bãñónù  
 you (pl) Ambe SM P2 tell 7-lie  
 “You and Ambe told a lie.”
- b. *à kî jí wáá mbé.*  
 à kî jí wáá àmbé  
 he/she P2 see them Ambe  
 “he saw him/her and Ambe.”
- c. *à kî fá mbó bì’í mbé.*  
 à kî fá á ñ-bô bì’í àmbé  
 he/she P2 give to 6-hands us Ambe  
 “He gave it to Ambe and I.”

In these examples, the pronoun indicates the person and number of the entire coordinate NP. Thus although *bì’í* is a plural pronoun meaning ‘us/we’ elsewhere, in this context it translates as ‘I and X’. This plural form of the pronoun serves morphologically to mark the entire NP for person and number.

The coordinators *ní* and *bó* can both be used in the same construction to link a series of NPs. Although these two coordinators can generally be used interchangeably, the tendency in this case is to use *bó* between the first set of NPs and *ní* between the last two NPs in the series. The first set of NPs could also simply be juxtaposed with either *bó* or *ní* inserted between the last two.

- (17) a. *fórí bó síñ bó bùsí ní ò-àñkègè ká tú’ú ñkxì.*  
 ø-fórí bó ø-síñ bó ø-bùsí ní ø-àñkègè bó ká tú’ú ñ-kxì  
 1-rat and 1-bird and 1-cat and 1-cock SM F0 fetch 1-water  
 “Rat, Bird, Cat and Cock will fetch water.”
- b. *ñsós, léñ, bú’ú ní/bó nààkò ká ñití mós’ó wá.*

ñ-sáð    ø-láŋá    ø-bú'ú    ñi/bó    ø-nààkò    bó    ká    ñìtá    ø-mó'ó    w-á  
 1-elephant    1-horse    1-baboon    and    1-bush pig    SM    F0    light    1-fire    1-the  
 "Elephant, Horse, Baboon and Bush pig will light the fire."

## 2. Subordination

Subordinate clauses in Bafut are marked by special subordinating morphemes which denote time, purpose, condition and concession. Apart from these special subordinating morphemes, the structure of subordinate clauses is very similar to that of main (independent) clauses although the interaction of tense and aspect may differ in main and subordinate clauses. While it is generally the case that the subordinate clause follows the main clause, it is worth noting that its position can also be influenced by the role it plays in linking the main clause to the preceding discourse. In the sections that follow, we examine the various types of subordinate clauses in Bafut highlighting the subordinating morpheme and other special syntactic properties of the subordinate clause.

### 2.1. Complement subordinate clauses

The complement subordinate clause serves as a complement to regular subordinating verbs such as *fwóŋê* "say", *túù* "refuse/deny" *lénsê* "announce/deliver a message", *jê'ê* "cry/regret", *bíí* "accept/agree/believe", *wá'átê* "think/remember/believe", *bí'ísê* "deceive", etc. The subordinating morpheme is the regular complementiser *mó* which is usually positioned immediately after the main verb. There are generally no restrictions on tense marking in the main and subordinate clauses as the following examples show.

- (18) a. *sùù kì fwóŋ mójú ká zì.*  
 sùù á kì fwóŋê mó jú ká zì  
 Suh SM P2 say Comp. he F0 come  
 "Suh said that he (i.e. Suh) will come."
- b. *bú'ú wá kì wà'átí mójó já kì kwô.*  
 ø-bú'ú w-á á kì wá'átê mó n-ô j-á ì kì kwô  
 1-baboon 1-the SM P2 think Comp 9-snake 9-the SM P2 die  
 "The baboon thought that the snake was dead."
- c. *bì ká bíí mó ñùŋgàŋ wá kì jèrê.*  
 bì á ká bíí mó ñ-ùŋgàŋ w-á á kì jèrê  
 Bih SM F0 believe Comp 1-herbalist 1-the SM P2 steal  
 "Bih will believe (the rumour) that the herbalist stole."

When the subject of the main clause is coreferential with that of the subordinate clause as in (18a), the oblique 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun *jú* is used in the subordinate clause. Where coreferentiality is not intended, the subject pronoun *á* is used.

Each of the propositions (i.e. in the main clause and in the subordinate clause) can be negated. If the clause contains an object noun phrase, the verb, as usual with negative clauses, occurs in sentence-final position.

- (19) a. *àmbe kì bí'ísá mǎ wá mójó nó ntàbà'á.*  
 àmbé é kì bí'ísê mǎ wá mó jú nó àntàbà'á  
 Ambe SM P2 deceive chief the that he smoke tobacco  
 "Ambe deceived the chief that he (i.e. Ambe) smokes."

- b. *(kàá) àmbé kì wá'á mfɔ̄ wá bí'ísì mɔ́ jú nó ntàbà'á.*  
 (kàá) àmbé é kì wá'á m̄fɔ̄ wá bí'ísì mɔ́ jú nó àntàbà'á  
 Neg Ambe SM P2 Neg chief the deceive Com he smoke tobacco  
 p  
 “Ambe did not deceive the chief that he smokes.”
- c. *àmbé kì bì'ísì mfɔ̄ wá mɔ́ (kàá) jú sɔ́ ntàbà'á nó.*  
 àmbé é kì bí'ísì m̄fɔ̄ wá mɔ́ (kàá) jú sí àntàbà'á nó  
 Ambe SM P2 deceive chief the that Neg he Neg tobacco smoke  
 “Ambe deceived the chief that he does not smoke.”

Negating both clauses in the same construction is grammatically possible although the result is usually pragmatically rather odd.

## 2.2. Purpose and reason subordinate clauses

Purpose and reason subordinate clauses provide explanations for the occurrence of a given event, action or state. They differ in that the purpose clauses express a motivating event which must be unrealised at the time of the main event while reason clauses express a motivating event which may be realised at the time of the main clause event. While the purpose clause is marked by the subordinating morpheme *tǎ* “in order to/so as to”, the reason clause is marked by *nlóŋmɔ́* “because”.

- (20) a. *mè ká wàŋsɛ̀ bìnnì tǎ fù bóò.*  
 mè ká wàŋsɛ̀ bìnnì tǎ fù á à-bóò  
 I F0 quickly Wake up Sub. Go bush Prep 7-hunting  
 “I will wake up early in order to go hunting.”
- b. *n-èè kì fù'ú ñkábí nlóŋmɔ́ kì tsínì n-j'ò'ò m-àŋgjà.*  
 n-èè à kì fù'ú ñ-kábí nlóŋmɔ́ à kì tsínì n-j'ò'ò m-àŋgjà  
 squirrel SM P2 earn money because he P2 D-verb N- Woman  
 marry  
 “Squirrel worked to earn money because he had to marry a wife.”
- c. *bàŋgjà ká sàŋ mídzi nlóŋmɔ́ ndzi ká kúú lá'á.*  
 bàŋgjà bí ká sàŋ mídzi nlóŋmɔ́ ndzi ì ká kúú á àlá'á  
 women SM F0 dry food because hunger SM F0 enter Prep village  
 “Women will dry (preserve) food because the village will experience hunger.”

As we notice in the example in (a), tense is generally not marked in purpose clauses. Tense marking in reason clauses depends on the tense of the main clause. Even when not specified, it is understood that the subordinate clause event occurs later than the main clause event or, at best, at the same time as the main clause event.

## 2.3. Time subordinate clauses

Time subordinate clauses express temporal sequence relationships between clauses. Across languages, these relationships are typically marked by independent morphemes such as English “when”, “before”, and “after”. In Bafut, time adverbials such as “when” and “after” are expressed in a roundabout fashion using expressions such as “at the time that”, “later than the time that”, etc. The adverbial “before” is however expressed using a subordinate clause marked by the morpheme *mbɔ́ŋ*. In such constructions, the event expressed in the subordinating clause has not yet happened at the time of the event named in the main clause.

Thus, there is a sense in which *mbóŋ* clauses are conceptually negative from the point of view of the event in the main clause. Following are some examples of *mbóŋ* clauses.

- (21) a. *nóŋgúbí já kî mǐ mbí já mbóŋ mà kúú wá kò.*  
 nóŋgúbí já ì kî mǐ mǐbî já mbóŋ mà kúú wá àkò  
 python the SM P2 swallow goat the before I enter the-Prep bush  
 “The python swallowed the goat before I entered the bush.”
- b. *kòò bàrê já ní fíká’á mbóŋ tá bós bjá zǐ.*  
 kòò àbàrê já nì fíká’á mbóŋ tá bós bjá bì zǐ  
 lock madman the with clog before Cond children the SM come  
 “Put clogs on the madman’s legs before the children come.”

As we notice in the (b) example, it is possible to insert the morpheme *tá* after the subordinator *mbóŋ*. This morpheme which seems to be derived from the subjunctive mood marker serves a reinforcement/emphatic role in these constructions.

In very special circumstances, it is possible for the “before” clause to precede the main clause in the example in (21a). In this case, the “before” clause takes the imperfective aspect marker *sí* and the word *lébóŋ* which expresses the idea of “done already”, “happened already” follows the “before” clause. Thus (21a) would be rendered as:

- mà kî sí kúú wá kò lébóŋ nóŋgúbí já mímé mbí já.*  
 mà kî sí kúú wá kò lébóŋ nóŋgúbí já mǐ-mê nô já  
 I P2 Asp enter the-prep bush already python the Swallow- snake the  
 Asp  
 “Before I entered the bush, the python had already swallowed the goat.”

#### 2.4. Conditional subordinate clauses

Conditional subordinate clauses in Bafut can be divided into two broad semantic categories: *reality conditionals* and *imaginative conditionals*. Reality conditionals express “real” present, habitual or past events. Imaginative conditionals, on the other hand, state what might have been or predict what will be. In both types, the main clause contains the ordinary conditional mood marker *bé* and the subordinate/consequence clause is marked by the special subordinating morpheme *bóŋ*.

Sentences containing a reality conditional clause usually state basic truths. Following are some examples.

- (22) a. *m̂bû bé kí bós sǐ’í bóŋ kó ŋgòò.*  
 m̂-bû ì bós kí bós sǐ’í bóŋ ì kô ñ-gòò  
 9-dog SM Cond P2 hunt alot Sub it catch 9-porcupine  
 “A stubborn dog ends up with a bullet in the head”. Lit. if a dog hunts a lot, it ends up encountering a porcupine (porcupines are known to kill dogs during such encounters).
- b. *àbó bé tìgá mfêŋ sǐ’í bóŋ á mós nì-búrê.*  
 à-bó á bós tìgè á m-fêŋ sǐ’í bóŋ á mós nì-búrê  
 7-hand SM Cond delay Prep 1-anus alot Sub it touch 5-feaces  
 “If the finger spends much time in the anus, it gets soiled.”
- c. *ò bé kí fà’á sígíni bóŋ màŋgè wàŋsí nǐ’ó yò.*

ò bɔ́ kɪ́ fà'â sígínì bóŋ m-àŋgjà à wàŋsí N-jɔ'ò yô  
 you Cond Asp work nice Sub 1-woman SM quickly N- you  
 marry

“if you are hardworking, it is easy to find a wife.”

It is generally not common to mark tense in these constructions. Where discourse conditions permit, the subordinate clause can be marked for the future tense.

Imaginative conditionals are also termed counterfactuals because they express that which did not happen or which might happen only if certain specific conditions are met. Following are some examples.

(23) a. *mə bɔ́ tʃí'í súù bóŋ bì'íjú ká fú.*

mə bɔ́ tʃí'í súù bóŋ bì'íjú ká fú  
 I cond meet Suh Sub I + him F0 go farm  
 “If I meet Suh, we will go to the farm.”

b. *ò lí bɔ́ bín kòò wá bóŋ m̄f̄ð mə'ánó yô.*

ò lí bɔ́ bín ì-kòò w-á bóŋ m̄-f̄ð à mə'ánó yô  
 you P2 cond dance 3-song 3-the Sub 1-chief SM give gift you  
 “If you had danced, the chief would have given you a gift.”

c. *àmbé bɔ́ wùrí ndá bóŋ mə ká fá máŋgjà yú mbó.*

àmbé à bɔ́ wùrê ñdâ bóŋ mə ká fá máŋgjà yú mbó  
 Ambe SM cond build house Sub I F0 give woman his hands  
 “If Ambe builds a house, I will give him a wife.”

Unlike the reality conditional constructions, tense marking in both main and subordinate clauses is possible in the imaginative conditionals. The tense morpheme in the main clause usually precedes the conditional mood marker *bɔ́*.

## 2.5. Concession subordinate clauses

Concession clauses generally make a concession against which the proposition in the main clause is contrasted. The concession clause is marked in three different ways. In the first method, the concession clause is preceded by the morpheme *kíká* “although” and the regular complementiser *mɔ́*. The concession clause itself can either precede or follow the main clause.

(24) a. *kíká mɔ́ bì tsí nì mú láá ká tʃíð ñkwíí.*

kíká mɔ́ bì à tsí nì mú láá à ká tʃíð ñkwíí  
 although that Bih SM be with child DEF she F0 fetch wood  
 “Although Bih is pregnant, she will fetch wood.”

b. *bì ká tʃíð ñkwíí kíká m̄ tsí nì mú láá.*

bì à ká tʃíð ñkwíí kíká m̄ à tsí nì mú láá  
 Bih SM F0 fetch wood although that she be with child DEF  
 “Bih will fetch wood even though she is pregnant.”

In the actual rendition of the first example (i.e. (a)), there is a noticeable phonetic break between the main and the subordinate clause. This break is absent in the second example in (b).

In the second method of marking concession clauses the concession clause is introduced by the formative *wí'í* “although” followed by a reduplicated form of the verb of the concession clause.

- (25) *mó wì'ì nyóyòò láá (lá) m̀ ká yèé mítáá.*  
 mó wì'ì N-yóòyòò láá (lá) m̀ ká yèé á mítàà  
 I D-verb N-sick-sick DEF (but) I F0 go Prep market  
 “Although I am sick, I will go to the market.”

There is a phonetic break after the concession clause and the main clause is introduced by an optional *lá* which literally means “but” in English. Unlike the preceding cases in (24), the concession clause in (25) can only precede the main clause. As usual, the concession verb which follows the formative *wí'í* takes an initial homorganic nasal consonant.

The third method of marking concession clauses is very similar to the preceding one. The concession is introduced by the formative *wí'í*. The verb of the concession clause then follows but this time it is not reduplicated. Rather, it is repeated and the second instance (of the verb) is separated from the first by the particle *bá*.

- (26) *mó wì'ì nyòò bá yòò láá (lá) m̀ ká yèé mítáá.*  
 mó wì'ì N-yòò bá yòò láá (lá) m̀ ká yèé á mítàà  
 I although N-sick part sick DEF (but) I F0 go Prep market  
 “Although I am sick, I will (still) go to the market.”

Although the particle which separates the two instances of the concession verb is similar in form to the conditional mood marker *bá*, it does not express any notion of conditionality. Rather, it serves to emphasize the speaker’s determination to carry out the action in the main clause.

### 3. Serialization

In the serial verb construction in Bafut, two or more verbs which all refer to subparts or aspects of a single overall event occur in a series in the same construction. The second verb usually denotes an outgrowth of the action denoted by the first verb and represents a further development, consequence, result, goal or culmination of the action of the first verb. Morphologically, the serial verb construction (henceforth SVC) is marked by an initial homorganic nasal consonant on the second verb (or subsequent verbs) when the construction is in the past tense. In the discussion that follows, we will use mostly examples in the past tense in order to highlight this morphological marker. Cases of serial constructions in the future tense will be presented in the next chapter (13).

Four major categories of the SVC have been identified in Bafut. These are (i) locative/directional SVCs, (ii) Manner SVCs, (iii) Resultative SVCs and (iv) Comparative SVCs. Each category is treated in turn below.

#### 3.1. Locative/Directional SVCs

In the locative or directional SVC, a verb of motion is followed by a second verb which, in most cases, denotes the location, or direction of the motion encoded in the first verb. The verbs of motion that usually occur in this construction include *kóò* “climb/ascend/go up”, *sígò* “descend/go down”, *kúú* “enter”, *kwéé* “return from farm”, *tóó* “walk”, *zì* “come”, *fè'é* “go out”, *dàñò* “cross over”, *kxǎ* “run”, *dàrà* “fly”, *ñàññò* “crawl”, and *lúú* “jump”. On the other hand, the verbs that generally occur in V2 position include *yèé* “go”, *kù'ú* “reach”,



*jwí'í* “arrive”, *zǐ* “come”, and *fê'ê* “go out”. Following are a few examples of locative/directional SVCs.

- (27) a. *nàà dzá tsìm kó'ó nyèé búrá.*  
 nàà dzá tsìm dzǐ kó'ó N-nyèé á àbùrì  
 animals the all SM climb N-go Prep heaven  
 “All the animals went (up) to heaven.”
- b. *mìjàà wá zìmê ñkú'ú ntó'ó.*  
 mìjàà wá à zǐ-mê N-kù'ù á ñtó'ó  
 river the SM come-past N-reach Prep palace  
 “The river has come right to the palace.”

The locative/directional serial verbs take a prepositional phrase complement. This complement is not obligatory especially in contexts where the location is already mentioned in the preceding discourse.

### 3.2. Manner SVCs

Manner SVCs express the manner in which an action or a process is carried out or perceived. The first verb expresses the manner while the second verb expresses the main action/event. This relative ordering of the two verbs marks out the manner SVC from other SVCs in Bafut as the modifying verb generally follows (rather than precede) the core verb. Examples of manner SVCs are given below.

- (28) a. *wáà múngìn ká wàñsǐ tsí ní m-ù.*  
 w-áà ø-múngìn à ká wàñsê tsí ní m-ù  
 1-this 1-bride SM F0 quickly be with 1-child  
 “This (particular) bride will conceive very quickly/easily.”
- b. *m̀bú já yá'ásó ndóré bóbì bós bí.*  
 m̀-ù j-á í yá'ásê N-dórê bóbì b-óò b-ì.  
 9-dog 9-the SM always N-play with 2children 2-its  
 “The dog often/always plays with its puppies.”
- c. *nó já k̀ kòñní ñzì nlóó ndì wá.*  
 n-ó j-á ì k̀ kóñnê N-zǐ N-lóô ñ-dì w-á  
 9-snake 9-the SM P2 silently N-come N-bite 1-witch 1-the  
 “The snake silently came up and bit the witch.”

In the first example, the second verb *tsí* does not take an initial homorganic nasal consonant because the construction is marked for the future tense. In the other examples (b) and (c) which are not marked for the future tense, the second/subsequent verb takes the usual homorganic nasal consonant. The third example in (c) seems to combine serialization and consecutivisation. The act of coming silently, although marked by two verbs, is perceived as a single overall event. However, coming silently and biting the witch is perceived as separate events unfolding in a sequence, one after the other.

### 3.3. Resultative

In the resultative SVC, the second verb denotes the result or consequence of the action of the preceding verb. The resultative SVC generally looks like a consecutive construction

especially in cases where the two verbs are separated by a noun phrase. Consider the examples below.

- (29) a. *ηùbóó wá kî tùm náà já nzwítê*  
 η-ù-bóò w-á à kî tùmê n-àà j-á N-zwítê  
 1-person-hunting the SM P2 shoot 9-animal 9-the N-kill  
 “The hunter shot the animal dead.”
- b. *àfisé tí bìlwìn bjá mmà’á*  
 à-fisè á tíî bì-lwìn bj- m-mà’á  
 7-wind SM push 2-old people 2-the N-throw  
 “The wind pushed down the old people.”
- c. *ñtsìitwúgí wá kî bwîi nli’ìnè nód.*  
 ñ-tsìi-twúgí w-á à kî bwîi n-lì’ìnó n-óò  
 1-guard-night 1-the SM P2 sleep N-forget 1-time  
 “The night watchman slept and forgot the time.”

In (29a) and (29b), the two verbs in each construction are separated by a noun phrase visually creating the impression of a sequence of actions realized one after the other as in a consecutive clause. The interpretation of the constructions however leaves no doubt as to their serial properties. That is, although the verbs are separated, they are interpreted as representing a single overall action unfolding as a unit and not in separate stages. For instance, shooting the animal dead in (29a) can only be viewed as a single action in which the hunter shot the animal and it died. It cannot be interpreted as meaning that the hunter shot the animal and then killed it (later). In like manner (29b) cannot be interpreted as meaning that the wind pushed the old people and then later threw them to the ground in a separate action.

### 3.4. Comparative SVCs

The comparative SVC is characterized by the presence of the verbs *tfǎ* “surpass” and *kù’ú* “suffice/be enough”. These verbs, occurring in second position, introduce an element of comparison.

- (30) a. *kwímánkò’ò lé ñkxè ntfá ñgjá*  
 ø-kwímánkò’ò à lé N-kxè N-tfǎ ñ-gjá  
 1-Tortoise SM P3 N-run N-surpass 1-deer  
 “Tortoise ran faster than Deer.”
- b. *ìfà’á wáà yá’á ñkù’ú fá’á bǎ bíbáà*  
 ì-fà’á w-áà í yá’á N-kù’ú ì-fà’á b-à bí-báà  
 1-work 1-this SM plenty N-sufficient 1-work 2-people 2-two  
 “This job is big enough for two people.”

In the first example, the homorganic nasal consonant on the first verb *ñ-kxè* “run” is occasioned by the P3 tense marker. On the other hand, the nasal on the second verb *n-tfǎ* “surpass” is the regular consecutivisation/serialization morpheme which we expect to find on second/subsequent verbs in any serial verb construction. This homorganic nasal consonant is also found on second/subsequent verbs in the consecutive construction. The two nasals, and consequently the two constructions, however differ significantly. Although both constructions make use of verbs in a string, the verbs in an SVC refer to subparts or aspects of a single overall event/action while those in a consecutive construction represent a sequence

of separate actions/events occurring one after the other. Compare the following examples of consecutive clauses to the preceding SVCs.

- (31) a. *àmbe kî zî njúú múndzù ñkwúrô.*  
 àmbé à kî zî N-júú ø-mú-ndzù N-kwúrô  
 Ambe SM P2 come N-buy 1-chld-peanuts N-eat  
 “Ambe came, bought and ate peanuts.”
- b. *àtádè já kî wǒ ñsé ñkwô.*  
 à-tádè j-á à kî wǒ á ñ-sê ñ-kwô  
 7-calabash 7-the SM P2 fall Prep 9-ground N-break  
 “The calabash fell to the ground and broke.”

In these examples, the actions/events denoted by the verbs are viewed as occurring one after the other. Thus in (31a) for instance, the action of coming preceded all other actions. Then came the buying of peanuts and finally the eating of the peanuts. This temporal relationship between the actions of the different verbs is distinct, for example, from what we find in (29a) where shooting the animal cannot be separated from killing it. This temporal relationship between the events of the verbs makes it plausible to think that the consecutive structure was derived from a coordinate construction in which the two (or more verbs belonged to different clauses joined together by the conjunction *ñkí* “and also/and then”. What appears on the surface now as a consecutive construction is the result of various transformations notably truncation of a part of the conjunction. Although this view appears quite plausible, one will be hard put to it accounting for the semantics of the different conjuncts as well as the details of the truncation process affecting the conjunction marker.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the structure of what we call complex constructions. We described the markers of coordination, their syntactic distribution, context of use and the effect that coordinators and subordinators have on other constituents of the construction. We also described the different forms of subordination and their distinctive features as well as the relationship between tense/aspect and subordination in Bafut. Finally, we described the distinguishing features of serialisation and consecutivisation in Bafut. At the end of this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the description of these constructions does not come any way close to exhaustive. In fact, the details of each construction type can take up a whole volume depending on the conceptual framework adopted. Given our objective of providing a simple straightforward description of the facts of the language in this volume however, the description we have given of these constructions is sufficient to open up avenues for further study.

## Chapter 12

### Conclusion: curiosities in Bafut grammar

#### Introduction

The intention in this concluding chapter of the book is to draw the attention of the reader to phenomena in the grammar of Bafut which I call curiosities. These are phenomena which, to some extent, are considered intriguing in the sense that I failed to see a straightforward description or explanation for them. My reason for drawing the reader's attention to these phenomena is therefore to encourage more in-depth research especially from researchers who are interested in related Grassfields Bantu languages. The phenomena that I describe have an aerial status and a closer examination of these facts in other languages may reveal facts about the relatedness of Grassfields Bantu languages. These phenomena include reduplication, homorganicity, and anaphora.

#### 1 Reduplication

Reduplication in Bafut affects various word classes including prepositions and articles. The process can affect an entire word or just part of it producing different semantic effects especially intensification/emphasis. The reduplication processes that I describe in the following pages are quite common across the Grassfields languages.

##### 1.1 Partial reduplication

Partial reduplication appears to be very restricted in the Bafut language. It has been observed to affect only a very restricted class of nouns and verbs.

##### *A. Noun reduplication*

The partial reduplication observed in nouns is of the type attested in West African Benue-Congo and Kwa languages. In this special type of partial reduplication, the initial consonant of a nominal root is copied and an underspecified vowel is inserted between the reduplicated consonant and the nominal root. The underspecified vowel is the high central unrounded vowel [i]. Consider the examples below.

- |                   |                            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) a. à-tsítsá'à | “mud”, “lump of wet earth” |
| b. à-sísáj        | “sugar cane”               |
| c. à-lílóó        | “bat”                      |
| d. à-kìkúŋ        | “owl”                      |
| e. à-kíkóó        | “type of insect”           |
| f. à-lílóŋ        | “shadow”                   |
| g. à-kìkó'ò       | “a dumb person”            |

These examples all belong in noun class 7 with their corresponding plurals in class 8. Unlike in other Grassfields languages like Isu (Kiessling pc) where the reduplicated morpheme tends at times to function like a secondary nominal prefix, in the Bafut examples above, the reduplicated morpheme is fused with the root and does not add any special meaning to the entire form.

### A. Verb reduplication

Another form of partial reduplication is attested in a restricted number of direction verbs. In this category, the first syllable of the direction verbs is reduplicated to designate settlers who have moved in from a neighbouring region.

(2) a.	ø-sísíí/ò-sísíí	“descendant from higher geographical region”	from	sígô	“descend”
b.	ø-kókó’ó/ò-kókó’ó	“one who moved up from a lower (geographical) region”	from	kó’ô	“climb”
c.	ø-tswítswí/ò-tswítswí	“autochthon (Original settler)”	from	tswî	“sit/stay”
d.	ø-kwékweé/ò-kwékweé	“one who moved into the city from a remote area”	from	kwéê	“return from farm/bush”
e.	ø-kúkúú/ò-kúkúú	“one who moved into city from unspecified area / foreigner”	from	kúù	“enter”

### 1.2. Total Reduplication

Total reduplication in Bafut is observed in a variety of functions affecting nouns, adverbs, locatives, adjectives and verbs.

#### A. Locatives/Prepositions

Locatives/prepositional phrases reduplicate to indicate distance from point of reference.

(3) a.	múmmúm	“right/deep inside”	from	múm	“inside”
b.	òdòndòndò	“right on the surface”	from	òdòndò	“up, above, on top”
		“right on top”			
c.	òfòfòfò	“deep below”	from	òfòfò	“bottom”
d.	òbèèbèè	“Just at the side”	from	òbèè	“side”
e.	àtútú	“Just at the top”	from	àtù	“head”
f.	òshîshî	“right in front”	from	òshî	“face”

Prepositional phrases also reduplicate to indicate temporal regularity. The temporal adverbial alone can reduplicate or the entire phrase containing the adverbial (which is a noun) preceded by the particle *tú* “every” can reduplicate.

(4) a.	òdzwíndzwí	“daily”	from	òdzwî	“day”
	túndzwítúndzwí	“everyd ay”	from		
b.	ògjàngjà	“weekly”	from	ògjà	“week”
	túngjàtúngjà	“every week”	from		
c.	túsàntúsà	“monthly”	from	sà	“moon/month”
d.	òlòlò	“yearly”	from	òlò	“year”
	túlòótúlò	“every year”	from		

e.	ḥgàáḥgáá	“every time/often”	from	ḥgàà	“time”
f.	nòḥnò	“every time/often”	from	nò	“time”

## B. Nouns

Nouns reduplicate to denote various semantic functions. Most prominent of these semantic functions is a quality which indicates dominance in a group. The dominance could be partial or total. In partial dominance, the noun reduplicates to indicate that the objects, persons, phenomena, etc. expressed by the noun outnumber all others in the group.

(5) a.	ḥgḍ'ḥgḍ'ḍ	“made up mainly of stones”	from	ḥgḍ'ḍ	“stone”
b.	ḥtítí	“made up mainly of trees”	from	ḥtì	“trees/ sticks”
c.	ḥgḍḍḥgḍḍ	“containing mainly drums”	from	ḥgḍḍ	“drum”
d.	nḥgḍḍḥnḥgḍḍ	“containing mainly plantains”	from	nḥgḍḍ	“plantain”
e.	mḥkḥmḥkḥ	“containing mainly pipes”	from	mḥkḥ	“pipes”
f.	bḥḥbḥḥ	“made up mostly of children”	from	bḥḥ	“children”
g.	bḥfḥbḥfḥ	“made up mostly of chiefs”	from	bḥfḥ	“chiefs”
h.	bḥḥgḥḥbḥḥgḥḥ	“made up mainly of women”	from	bḥḥgḥḥ	“women”
i.	bḥtḥbḥtḥ	“made up mainly of fathers”	from	bḥtḥ	“fathers”
j.	mḥbḥḥḥmḥbḥḥḥ	“made up mainly of men”	from	mḥbḥḥḥ	“men”

Total dominance, in a sense, is an extension of partial dominance since the reduplicated forms in partial dominance are made to function in total dominance via addition of the particle *tsí'ḥ* which means “only”. Thus, the addition of this particle to the examples in (5) above introduces the notion of “exclusion”. For instance placing *tsí'ḥ* before the reduplicated form designates a group comprising the persons or objects referred to by the unreduplicated noun form to the exclusion of any other person, object or phenomenon.

(6) a.	tsí'ḥ ḥgḍ'ḥgḍ'ḍ	“made up solely of stones”	from	ḥgḍ'ḍ	“stone”
b.	tsí'ḥ ḥtítí	“made up solely of trees”	from	ḥtì	“trees/ sticks”
c.	tsí'ḥ ḥgḍḍḥgḍḍ	“made up solely of drums”	from	ḥgḍḍ	“drum”
d.	tsí'ḥ nḥgḍḍḥnḥgḍḍ	“made up solely of plantains”	from	nḥgḍḍ	“plantain”
e.	tsí'ḥ mḥkḥmḥkḥ	“made up solely of pipes”	from	mḥkḥ	“pipes”
f.	tsí'ḥ bḥḥbḥḥ	“made up solely of children”	from	bḥḥ	“children”
g.	tsí'ḥ bḥfḥbḥfḥ	“made up solely of chiefs”	from	bḥfḥ	“chiefs”
h.	tsí'ḥ bḥḥgḥḥbḥḥgḥḥ	“made up solely of women”	from	bḥḥgḥḥ	“women”
i.	tsí'ḥ bḥtḥbḥtḥ	“made up solely of fathers”	from	bḥtḥ	“fathers”
j.	tsí'ḥ mḥbḥḥḥmḥbḥḥḥ	“made up solely of men”	from	mḥbḥḥḥ	“men”

Another form of partial dominance which we prefer to treat as distinct from the examples in (5) above for reasons that will become clear as the discussion progresses are cases in which the reduplicated forms are mass/liquid nouns or body parts. In the case of mass/liquid nouns,

reduplication indicates that a mixture contains an excess of the reduplicated noun (7a – e). Reduplicated body parts are used pejoratively to indicate an imbalance in size, lack of proportion or absence of symmetry.

(7) a.	fɪŋgwáŋfɪŋgwâŋ	“salty/too much salt”	from	fɪŋgwâŋ	“salt”
b.	ŋkxìíŋkxì	“watery/too much water”	from	ŋkxì	“water”
c.	mìlù’ùmflù’ù	“too much wine/wine only”	from	mìlù’ù	“wine”
d.	àlólóló	“bloody/too much blood”	from	àlóló	“blood”
e.	fìlhífilhí	“too much smoke”	from	fìlhí	“smoke”
f.	àtútú	“small trunk with a big head”	from	àtú	“head”
g.	m̀f̀ə̀ŋm̀f̀ə̀ŋ	“small trunk, big buttocks”	from	m̀f̀ə̀ŋ	“bottom”
h.	mí’ímí’ì	“small head, huge eyes”	from	mí’ì	“eyes”

### C. Verbs

Verbs are generally reduplicated to indicate intensity; that is, to indicate that the action is done repeatedly or thoroughly. In this form of reduplication, a homorganic nasal consonant is often inserted in between the reduplicants.

(8) a.	ʃì’ínʃì’ì	“wash thoroughly/for long”	from	ʃì’ì	“wash”
b.	bwíímbwî	“sleep for long”	from	bwî	“sleep”
c.	fámfá	“give over and again/to many”	from	fâ	“give”

Notice the tone changes in the reduplicated forms.

### D. Adjectives

Like the verbs, adjectives are also reduplicated to indicate intensity of a quality. In this form, a homorganic nasal consonant is also inserted in between the reduplicants.

(9) a.	fú’úmí’ù	“very white”	from	fú’ù	“white”
b.	sígínsíġ	“very clean”	from	síġ	“clean”
c.	kááríŋkáárí	“very twisted”	from	káárí	“twisted”

### E. Other forms of total reduplication in nouns

(10) a.	ŋkǎŋkàŋ	“line by line”	from	ŋkàŋ	“sline”
b.	ŋkèéŋkèè	“age group by age group”	from	ŋkèè	“age group”
c.	ŋgwà’áŋgwá’á	“age group by age group”	from	ŋgwà’à	“youth”
d.	̀ndzímndzìm	“secretly”	from	̀ndzìm	“back”

### F. Ideophones

(11) a.	ŋíŋŋíŋ	“tiny flies”
b.	̀nd̀nd̀	“moss”
c.	àwàáwàà	“type of grass”

### G. Manner adverbs

Manner adverbs reduplicate to express intensity, duration.

- |      |    |              |                                 |      |        |                        |
|------|----|--------------|---------------------------------|------|--------|------------------------|
| (12) | a. | bùùrìbùùrì   | “confused/in a confused manner” | from | bùúró  | “to confuse/to mix up” |
|      | b. | nítììtìtì    | “very quickly, extremely fast”  | from | nítìtì | “quick/fast”           |
|      | c. | àbóóbbóó     | “gently”                        |      |        |                        |
|      | d. | àtìrótìrì    | “in a very stupid way”          | from | àtìrì  | “a fool”               |
|      | e. | sígínísígínì | “nicely”                        | from | sígínì | “nice”                 |

### H. Numerals

Numerals reduplicate to indicate multiple values.

- |      |    |                |                |      |         |                |
|------|----|----------------|----------------|------|---------|----------------|
| (13) | a. | mò’ómò’ó       | “one by one”   | from | mò’ó    | “one”          |
|      | b. | nìbù’únìbù’ú   | “in nines”     | from | nìbù’ú  | “nine”         |
|      | c. | nìwúmnnìwúm    | “in tens”      | from | nìwúm   | “ten”          |
|      | d. | ḡkxíḡkxì       | “in hundreds”  | from | ḡkxí    | “one hundred”  |
|      | e. | ḡchwù’úḡchwù’ù | “in thousands” | from | ḡchwù’ù | “one thousand” |
|      | f. | ḡkámḡkâm       | “in millions”  | from | ḡkâm    | “one million”  |

So far, these are the major forms of reduplication commonly attested in the Bafut language. The following observations can be made about these different forms of reduplication:

- (a) High vowel reduplication affects only nouns and does not result in change of word class or modification in meaning;
- (b) Some instances of reduplication result in fossilized forms;
- (c) Partial reduplication in verbs and total reduplication in nouns results in change of syntactic category;
- (d) Reduplication of adverbs, numerals, etc. results in significant/insignificant modifications in meaning.

The observations in (a) and (c) retain attention raising the following questions:

- (i) How much of the features of the unreduplicated form are transferred into the new syntactic category and how do these transferred features cohabit with the original features of the receiving syntactic category?
- (ii) In the case of nominals, how do we define (characterize) the new syntactic category that results from reduplication?
- (iii) Is high vowel reduplication and partial verb reduplication an instance of phonological repetition or morphological reduplication?
- (iv) How does high vowel reduplication in Grassfields Bantu connect to a similar process in Kwa and West African languages?
- (v) How do these data from selected Grassfields Bantu inform a process of establishing a typology of reduplication for the entire Grassfields region?

These, and many other questions that could be raised about these data, are things that could retain the attention of a concerned researcher working on Grassfields Bantu languages. Because I



could not find straightforward answers to the questions raised above, I prefer to leave the issue of reduplication for future research.

## 2 Homorganicity

One other curious aspect of Bafut grammar is the homorganic nasal consonant which usually occurs in the initial position of nouns such as the following:

(14)A	i. m̀bàŋ “palm nut” ii. m̀bî “goat” iii. ñdâ “house”  iv. ñtàŋ “hut” v. ñkùù “tail (of animal)” vi. ñgárâ “gun”	B	i. m̀- <i>bwî</i> “sleeping (the act/manner of)” ii. ñ- <i>γèè</i> “going (the act/manner of)” iii. ñ- <i>làá m̀kúú</i> “(the act/manner of) cooking beans” iv. ñ- <i>kòó m̀-ŋkóbì</i> “wood carver” v. ñ- <i>lwìn</i> “old person” vi. ñ- <i>kwêfò</i> “evening”
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The interesting thing about this homorganic nasal consonant is that it occurs in many other areas of the grammar of the language and wherever it occurs, its meaning/function is usually not quite clear. For instance, in these examples of nouns, the homorganic nasal consonant has been treated as a noun class prefix (See chapter 3 of this book as well as Mfonyam (1989)) for classes 3b and 9. However, unlike other singular prefixes which are replaced in the plural form, the nasal prefix of these noun classes is maintained in the plural forms (e.g. ñ-*tsù/m̀-*n*-tsù* ‘mouth(s)’). This has led some researchers on Grassfields Bantu languages (e.g. Mutaka and Tamanji 2003, Niba 2007) to wonder if the homorganic nasal is actually the singular prefix of class 3b and 9 nouns.

While one can at least assume that in the noun category, the homorganic nasal functions as a class marker, in the verb category where the use of this nasal consonant is a very common feature, it is often difficult to make even an assumption about its function. Let us look at some of the instances in which the homorganic nasal consonant occurs in the verb category.

### 2.1 Tense Marking

The homorganic nasal consonant surfaces in the infinitive (*á m̀fâ’â* “to work”, *á ntsó’ô* “to remove”, *á ñkòŋê* “to love”). Its presence in the infinitive form of verbs is rather confusing since it co-occurs with another element which can rightfully be termed the infinitive marker. In fact, a number of researchers have termed this homorganic nasal consonant the infinitive marker. But the question remains; why an element that normally turns a verb into a nominal form will be used to mark the infinitive?

The homorganic nasal consonant also surfaces in some past tenses. It does not surface at all in the future tenses. In the regular past tenses, it surfaces in the today past tense and the remote past tense. Its occurrence in what I call the once-in-a-time past tenses is selective. The examples in (15) illustrate the today past tense while those in (16) illustrate the remote past tense.

- (15) a. *à lí mbóó ndá ñì tì.*  
à lí N-*bóó* ñ-*dâ* ñì ì-*tì*  
He P1 N-build 9-house with 8-sticks  
“He built a house with wood (today).”

- b. *à lí ntú’ú ñkxi múm ètòò.*

à lí N-tú'û ñ-kxì múm à-tóò  
 He P1 N-fetch 1-water inside 7-calabash  
 "He fetched water in a calabash (today)."

(16) a. *ñù bàñ wá lé mbín ntfá mbô.*

ñ-ù bàñ w-á à lé m-bínó n-ťǎ ì-bô  
 1-person red 1-the SM P3 N-dance N-pass 10-hands  
 "The white man was an excellent dancer."

b. *bìfí lé ñjèrì ntfá mbô.*

bì-fí bí lé N-jèrê N-ťǎ ì-bó  
 2-Bafut SM P3 N-steal N-pass 10-hands  
 "The Bafuts of long ago used to steal a lot."

In all the past tenses (including the yesterday past tense) when the once-in-a-time tense marker is used, the homorganic nasal consonant surfaces on the following verb.

(17) a. *à lí ntú'û ñkxì múm àtótó*

à lí N-tú'û ñ-kxì múm à-tóò  
 He P1 N-fetch 1-water inside 7-calabash  
 "He already fetched water in a calabash today (he does not need to so again)."

b. *ìfô wá kî nlintó mú wâ.*

ì-fô w-á à kî N-lintê m-û w-á  
 1-chief 1-the SM P2 look after 1-child 1-the  
 "The chief already took his turn in looking after the child (he does not need to do so again)."

c. *mú yù léê ntséñ ndòó jí.*

m-ú y-ù à léê N-tsèñê ñ-dòò j-ì  
 1-child 1-this SM P3 N-circumcise 1-penis 1-his

"This child had had himself circumcised already (so he does not need to do so again)."

In negative constructions in the past tense, regular P1 and P3 provoke the occurrence of an optional homorganic nasal consonant on the following negation marker.

(18) a. *kàâ lí wá'á mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à lí wá'á ì-bà á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P1 Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 "He did not fry meat for father (today)."

b. *kàâ lí ñwá'á mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à lí N-wá'á ì-bà á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P1 N-Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 "He did not fry meat for father (today)."

(19) a. *kàâ ìfô wá lé wá'á ndôñ mîlù'ù tsí'í jù nô.*

kàâ ìfô wâ à lé wá'á ñdôñ mîlù'ù tsí'í jù nô

Neg chief the SM P3 Neg calabash palm wine only him drink  
 “The chief did not drink a calabash of palm wine alone.”

b. *kàâ mf̃ wá lé ñwá’á ndôñ m̀l̀ù’ù tsí’í jù nô.*

kàâ m̃f̃ wá à lé N-wá’á ñdôñ m̀l̀ù’ù tsí’í jù nô  
 Neg chief the SM P3 N-Neg calabash palm wine only him drink  
 “The chief did not drink a calabash of palm wine alone.”

When the once-in-a-time past tense marker is used, an optional homorganic nasal occurs in all the past tenses including the yesterday past.

(20) a. *kàâ l̃í wá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à l̃í wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P1 Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He has not fried meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

b. *kàâ l̃í ñwá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à l̃í N-wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P1 N-Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He has not fried meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

(21) a. *kàâ k̃í wá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à k̃í wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P2 Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He he did not already fry meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

b. *kàâ k̃í ñwá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à k̃í N-wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P2 N-Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He did not already fry meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

(22) a. *kàâ léê wá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à léê wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P3 Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He has not fried meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

b. *kàâ léê ñwá’ǎ mbà mbó tàá káñê.*

kàâ à léê N-wá’á m̀-à á m-bó tàâ káñê  
 Neg he P3 N-Neg 9-meat Prep 10-hands father fry  
 “He has not fried meat for father (so it is his turn to do so).”

When the action is in the imperfective aspect, the homorganic nasal occurs only when the today past tense marker is used. In this case, the homorganic nasal occurs both on the aspectual marker and the following verb when the construction is not a negative one. Of course, the once-in-a-time tense marker is not involved in this case since once-in-a-time events cannot be in the imperfective aspect.

(23)		<i>Bih lí ŋká ndzî</i>			
		Bih	lí	N-ká	N-dzî
		Bih	P1	N-Prog	N-eat
		“Bih was eating.”			

When the construction is a negative one, the homorganic nasal consonant occurs on the negation marker and the verb but not on the aspectual marker which is situated between the negation marker and the verb.

(24)		<i>Bih lí ŋwá'á ká ndzî</i>				
		Bih	lí	N-wá'á	ká	N-dzî
		Bih	P1	N-Neg	Prog	N-eat
		“Bih was not eating.”				

From the foregoing discussion, it would appear that the homorganic nasal consonant is part of the past tense system. However, one still has to answer the question why its distribution is so selective. In fact, a number of questions that relate to this restrictive distribution remain unanswered. First, if it is part of the tense system, why does it not occur as the last element of the tense maker? In addition to this, why does it occur only with the once-in-a-time yesterday past tense marker and not the regular counterpart? Also, why does it occur on the aspectual marker in some contexts and not in others? As I pointed out at the start of this chapter however, these questions will remain open in this book awaiting a more detailed study of other related Grassfields Bantu languages.

## 2.2 Verb serialisation and consecutivisation

The homorganic nasal consonant is also attested in serial verb constructions and in consecutivisation structures.

- (25) a. *nàà dzá tsìm kó'ó ŋyèé búró.*  
 nàà dzá tsìm dzí kó'ô N-ŋyéê á àbùrì  
 animals the all SM climb N-go Prep heaven  
 “All the animals went (up) to heaven.”
- b. *m̀bú já yá'ásó ndóró bóbì b́́ó bí.*  
 m̀-bú j-á í yá'ásô N-dórô bóbì b-óò b-ì.  
 9-dog 9-the SM always N-play with 2children 2-its  
 “The dog often/always plays with its puppies.”
- c. *kwímáŋkò'ò lé ŋkxò ntsá ŋgjà*  
 ø-kwímáŋkò'ò à lé N-kxô N-tʃǎ ñ-gjà  
 1-Tortoise SM P3 N-run N-surpass 1-deer  
 “Tortoise ran faster than Deer.”
- d. *àmbê k̀ì źì njúú múndzù ŋkwúrô.*

àmbé à kí zǐ N-júú ø-mú-ndzù N-kwúrô  
 Ambe SM P2 come buy 1-chld-peanuts N-eat  
 “Ambe came, bought and ate peanuts.”

Even when the subsequent verb in the serial construction is separated from the preceding verb by a direct object NP, the homorganic nasal still surfaces.

- (26) a. *ηùbóó wá kì tǔm náà já nzwítô*  
 η-ù-bóò w-á à kì tǔmê n-àà j-á N-zwítô  
 1-person-hunting the SM P2 shoot 9-animal 9-the N-kill  
 “The hunter shot the animal dead.”
- b. *àfisó tíí bìlwìn bjá mmà ’à*  
 à-fisì á tíí bì-lwìn bj-á N-mà’â  
 7-wind SM push 2-old people 2-the N-throw  
 “The wind pushed down the old people.”

The intriguing thing about the homorganic nasal consonant in these constructions is that it never surfaces when the construction is in the future tense.

- (27) a. *nàà dzá tsìm ká kó’ô yéé búró.*  
 nàà dzá tsìm dzí ká kó’ô yéê á àbùrì  
 animals the all SM F0 climb go Prep heaven  
 “All the animals went (up) to heaven.”
- b. *kwímánkò’ò kálí kxò tǎ ngjá*  
 ø-kwímánkò’ò à kálí kxò tǎ ñ-gjá  
 1-Tortoise SM F1 run surpass 1-deer  
 “Tortoise ran faster than Deer.”
- c. *àmbé kájí zǐ júú múndzù kwúrô.*  
 àmbé à kájí zǐ júú ø-mú-ndzù kwúrô  
 Ambe SM F3 come buy 1-chld-peanuts eat  
 “Ambe came, bought and ate peanuts.”

One would imagine that the homorganic nasal consonant is the morphological marker of serialization and consecutivisation par excellence and that it functions to embed verbs in a series. The fact that its occurrence is restricted to past tenses therefore casts doubts on its role as the marker of serialization and consecutivisation. Its absence in future consecutivisation structures confirms the doubt expressed in the preceding chapter concerning the popular belief that the consecutivisation clause is a result of the merger of coordinate structures and that the homorganic nasal is a contracted form of the coordination marker *ηkí*.

### 2.3 Coordination

We also find instances of the homorganic nasal consonant in cases of coordination involving the coordinator *kí*. In all the three past tenses: P1, P2 and P3, the coordinator and the following verb take an initial homorganic nasal consonant.

- (28) a. *bìsínj bjà lí ñkwùrê nsánj wá ñkí ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí lí N-kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á N-kí N-jí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM P1 N-eat 1-corn 1-the N-and N-wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds ate the corn and bathed themselves.”
- b. *bìsínj bjà kì kwùrê nsánj wá ñkí ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí kì kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á N-kí N-jí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM P2 eat 1-corn 1-the N-and N-wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds ate the corn and bathed themselves.”
- c. *bìsínj bjà lé ñkwùrê nsánj wá ñkí ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí lé N-kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á N-kí N-jí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM P3 N-eat 1-corn 1-the N-and N-wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds ate the corn and bathed themselves.”

Unlike in the previous cases where the homorganic nasal does not feature in the P2 tense, we notice its presence in this case of coordination (cf 28b). In the future tenses on the other hand, the homorganic nasal consonant does not feature either on the coordinator or on the following verb.

- (29) a. *bìsínj bjà ká kwùrê nsánj wá kî ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí ká kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á kî ñjí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM F0 eat 1-corn 1-the and wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds will eat the corn and bathe themselves.”
- b. *bìsínj bjà kálì kwùrê nsánj wá kî ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí kálì kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á kî ñjí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM F1 eat 1-corn 1-the and wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds will eat the corn and bathe themselves (later today).”
- c. *bìsínj bjà káló kwùrê nsánj wá kî ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí kálò kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á kî ñjí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM F2 eat 1-corn 1-the and wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds will eat the corn and bathe themselves (tomorrow).”
- d. *bìsínj bjà kájí kwùrê nsánj wá kî ñjí'í nú jàà.*  
 bì-sínj bj-á bí kájí kwùrê ø-ànsánj w-á kî ñjí'í n-ú j-àà  
 2-birds 2-the SM F3 eat 1-corn 1-the and wash 9-body 9-their  
 “The birds shall eat the corn and bathe themselves.”

At the end of this subsection, one wonders what the exact role of the homorganic nasal consonant is. Why does it feature on both the coordinator and the subsequent verb in all three past tenses? Why does it fail to feature at all in the future tenses? Overall, what is the relationship between the homorganic nasal and tense marking?

## 2.4 Reduplication

A homorganic nasal consonant also occurs in some forms of verb and adjective reduplication. Verbs and adjectives are generally reduplicated to encode intensity of a quality. In this form of reduplication, a homorganic nasal consonant is inserted in between the reduplicants.

- (30) a.  $\text{ʃi'ínʃi'ì}$  “wash thoroughly/for long” from  $\text{ʃi'ì}$  “wash”  
 b.  $\text{bwíímbwî}$  “sleep for long” from  $\text{bwî}$  “sleep”  
 c.  $\text{fámfá}$  “give over and again/to many” from  $\text{fâ}$  “g”
- (31) a.  $\text{fú'úm fú'ù}$  “very white” from  $\text{fú'ù}$  “white”  
 b.  $\text{sígíínsígî}$  “very clean” from  $\text{sígî}$  “clean”  
 c.  $\text{káááríŋkáárí}$  “very twisted” from  $\text{káárí}$  “twisted”

What is interesting in these forms of reduplication is that the two segments of the reduplicated form can be separated by a full lexical item. When this happens, the homorganic nasal consonant still appears at the beginning of the second segment of the reduplicant.

- (32) *Ambé kî ʃi'í tsà'è dʒá nʃi'ì*  
 Ambé à kî ʃi'ì ì- tsà'è dʒ-á N-ʃi'ì  
 Ambe SM P2 wash 8-dresses 8-the N-wash  
 “Ambe washed the dresses thoroughly”.

As in the previous cases, one continues to wonder what the role of the homorganic nasal consonant is in instances of reduplication.

## 3. Anaphora

Anaphora was first mentioned in section 2.1 of chapter 4 where we treated instances of the use of a pronoun in place of a nominal that had been mentioned earlier on in the discuss. Thus we discussed cases of coreference (33a-b) and instances of switch reference (34a-b).

- (33) a. *kwímáŋkò'è lé nʃwóŋ mɔ́ jú ká lígí nsóó wâ.*  
 kwímáŋkò'è à lé N-ʃwóŋ mɔ́ jú ká lígí ñ-sòò w-á  
 Tortoise<sub>i</sub> SM P3 N-say that he<sub>i</sub> F0 till 1-farm 1-the  
 “Tortoise said that he will cultivate the land.”

- b. *ŋù bàjúúdà jɔ́ jéésò ŋkwétɔ́ jí.*  
 ŋù bàjúúdà á jɔ́ jéésò N-kwétɔ́ jì  
 person Jew SM see Jesus N-help him  
 “A Jew saw Jesus and helped him.”

- (34) a. *kwímáŋkò'è lé nʃwóŋ mɔ́ à ká lígí nsóó wâ.*  
 kwímáŋkò'è à lé N-ʃwóŋ mɔ́ à ká lígí ñ-sòò w-á  
 Tortoise<sub>i</sub> SM P3 N-say that he<sub>k</sub> F0 till 1-farm 1-the  
 “Tortoise said that he (someone else) will farm the land.”

- b. *ηù bàjúúdà jṣ jéésò, á kwétò jí.*  
 ηù bàjúúdà á jṣ jéésò á kwétò jì  
 person Jew SM see Jesus<sub>i</sub> he<sub>i</sub> help him  
 “A Jew saw Jesus and he (i.e. Jesus) helped him (i.e. the Jew).”

In addition to these forms of anaphoric usage relating principally to nominal forms, the language also exhibits other forms of anaphora in which some other element, not necessarily a pronoun, is used to refer to something that is simply understood (background kind of information) in discourse or to refer to a clause or some other piece of discourse. The reason why I have decided to present this information here and not in the chapter on pronouns is for the simple reason that the forms which I treat here as anaphoric do not specifically refer back to a noun and they are not often pronominal in nature.

### 3.1. The anaphoric adjunct γύ

The anaphoric adjunct γύ is used to refer to a time, place or instrumental adjunct mentioned earlier on in the discourse. In these examples illustrating the use of this anaphoric adjunct, indices are used to mark the anaphor and the adjunct that it refers to.

- (35) a. *bó kî twî nòò jîê bó zì γύ*  
 bó kî twî nòò jîê bó zì γύ  
 they P2 name [time that]<sub>i</sub> they come ANA<sub>i</sub>  
 “They told us the time when they would be coming”.
- b. *nìbà’á fá’á wúsáá, mṣ γèè γύ*  
 nìbà’ à à fá’á á àwúsáá mṣ γèè γύ  
 Niba SM work [in city]<sub>i</sub> I go ANA<sub>i</sub>  
 “Niba works in the city. I am going there”.
- c. *nìbà’á lí nìgí ηgḍ’ḍ ntwí mbàη γύ*  
 nìbà’ à à lí N-ìgí η-gḍ’ḍ N- twî mbàη γύ  
 Niba SM P1 N-take [stone]<sub>i</sub> N-crack kernels ANA<sub>i</sub>  
 “Niba took a stone and cracked kernels with it”.

In the first example, the anaphor refers back to the time adjunct *nòò jîê* ‘the time’ and in the second example, it refers back to the place adjunct *á àwúsáá* ‘in the city’. In the third example, even though the anaphor is indexed with the noun *ηgḍ’ḍ* ‘stone’, it actually refers back to the entire instrumental adjunct ‘with the stone’.

The anaphoric adjunct is also used in some constructions where it precedes a locative or beneficiary noun. In such constructions, although the anaphor occupies the same structural position as a preposition and actually seems to function like one, it refers back to a nominal that had been mentioned earlier on in the discourse or a nominal whose presence in the domain of discourse is known or simply assumed.

- (36) a. *mṣ kî nḥ γύ múm*  
 mṣ kî nḥ γύ múm  
 I P2 put ANA inside  
 “I put it inside it.”



- b. *mə̀ kɪ́ fǎ́ ɣú mbô*  
 mə̀ kɪ́ fǎ́ ɣú mbô  
 I P2 give ANA hands  
 “I gave it to him/her.”

In both examples, the direct object of the verbs *put* and *give* are omitted as they are understood in the context of the discourse. Anaphoric *ɣú* however does not refer to this direct object. Rather, it refers to the container inside which the direct object was put in (36a) and to the person to whom the direct object was given in (36b).

Interestingly, the semantics of anaphoric *ɣú* is restricted to third person singular usage. For instance, if a set of baskets is understood, assumed or mentioned in a discourse context, one cannot say *I put it inside them* using *ɣú* as in the examples in (36).

### 3.2. The anaphoric demonstrative preposition

The element that I refer to here as the anaphoric demonstrative preposition is anaphoric in meaning but not in form and structure. That is to say, semantically, it is used only in a context where a locative adjunct (e.g. in the basket) has been mentioned earlier on or is assumed/understood in the discourse context. However, unlike other anaphors which are used in place of the entity that they refer to, the anaphoric demonstrative preposition is used alongside the entity that it refers to. The only thing that makes it anaphoric is that it cannot be used with an entity that has not been mentioned or assumed in a discourse context.

The anaphoric demonstrative preposition has three forms: *wáá*, *fjáá* and *máá*. It can be used alongside an ordinary preposition such as *múm* ‘inside’. The use of these three forms is illustrated below.

- (37) a. *mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀-lù'ù mjáà wáà kò*  
 mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀-lù'ù mj-á wáá à-kò  
 I P2 keep 6- p wine 6-the DEM 7-bush  
 “I kept the palm wine in the bush (the bush that we know about) and not anywhere else”.
- b. *mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀lù'ù mjáà fjáá múm à-tə̀ə̀*  
 mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀-lù'ù mj-á fjáá múm à-tə̀ə̀  
 I P2 keep 6- p wine 6-the DEM inside 7-calabash  
 “I kept the palm wine inside that calabash (that calabash near you which we know about already) and not anywhere else”.
- c. *mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀lù'ù mjáà máá múm à-tə̀ə̀*  
 mə̀ kɪ́ lə̀ə̀ mɪ̀-lù'ù mj-á máá múm à-tə̀ə̀  
 I P2 keep 6- p wine 6-the DEM inside 7-calabash  
 “I kept the palm wine inside that particular calabash (the one that we have mentioned already) and not anywhere else”.

In the examples in (a) and (c), the location is not physically present but it is one that has already been mentioned or is understood as background information in the discourse context. In the (b) example on the other hand, the location is physically present and the speaker actually points at it for emphasis.

### 3.3. The Anaphoric definitiviser *láá*

The anaphoric definitiviser marks as definite (specifies) a specific entity, event or clause as anaphoric, i.e. known or already mentioned or assumed as background information. Like the anaphoric demonstrative preposition, it is used alongside the entity, event or clause that it marks as definite and anaphoric.

- (38) a. *mə̀ kɪ kwɛ̀rɪ̀ mɪ̀tʃɛ̀ mámú láá mbó kwímáŋkɔ̀'ð.*  
 mə̀ kɪ kwɛ̀rɪ̀ mɪ̀tʃɛ̀ mámú láá á ñ-bó ø-kwímáŋkɔ̀'ð  
 I P2 take 6-idea this DEF Prep 6-hands 1-tortoise  
 “I borrowed this particular idea (which we have been talking about) from Tortoise.”
- b. *bì tsímó ní mú láá mə̀ tʃó ŋkwí.*  
 bì à tsɪ̀-mó ñì m-ú láá mə̀ tʃɪ̀ð ñ-kwí  
 Bih SM be-Comp with 1-child DEF I fetch 10-wood  
 “As Bih became pregnant like that, I fetched wood.”

In the first example, *láá* marks the noun phrase *mɪ̀tʃɛ̀ mámú* ‘this idea’ as definite and anaphoric in the sense that it is the particular idea (and not just any other idea) that has already been mentioned in the discourse. In the second example, *láá* marks the clause *as Bih became pregnant* as definite and anaphoric.

In standard analyses of anaphora, one expects to see a pronominal form which is used to refer to a person, an animal or an object that had been mentioned earlier on in the discourse situation or that which is understood as background information. The phenomenon of anaphora that we have seen in this section distinguishes itself in a variety of ways:

- (a) The referents are not always nominal expressions. At times entire clauses act as referents;
- (b) The referent is, in many cases, present alongside the anaphoric pro-form;
- (c) The anaphor belongs to various word classes including determiners, prepositions, adjuncts, etc. and not just the pronoun class that we know of.

Taking these into consideration, one wonders whether we should continue to treat the phenomena handled in this section as anaphoric. In terms of semantic interpretation and pragmatic function, the phenomena are clearly anaphoric but in terms of morphological classes and syntactic distribution, the phenomena do not look anaphoric. For the time being, we leave them where they are in this chapter and wait for better planned study on these facts.

### Conclusion

To conclude this chapter of the book, I will like to mention again that I decided to conclude the book by drawing the attention of the reader to certain phenomena which I termed ‘curiosities’ because I could not provide a straightforward description for them. I talked of reduplication which manifests in various ways producing outcomes which do not fit neatly into any of the standard word classes that we know of, a homorganic nasal consonant which occurs ‘everywhere’ without an indication of its function, and anaphoric elements which are generally not nominal and which do occur adjacent to their referents. In addition to being curiosities in Bafut grammar, these phenomena have an aerial scope. The same kinds of reduplication, homorganicity and anaphora attested in Bafut are found in Medumba, Kom, Lamnso’, Isu, Ghomala’, Shupamum, Babungo, Fe’fe’, Mungaka, etc. A closer examination of these facts will

not only edify the grammars of these Grassfields Bantu languages, but will also through more light on how related these languages are to one another.