Abstracts

Plenary 1

The internal structure of Bantoid and defining the border with Bantu

Roger Blench
University of Jos/Kay Williamson Educational Foundation

The subgrouping of the Bantoid languages and their relationship with Bantu has been the subject of a number of proposals over the years, starting with Guthrie's misleading views. These models have been characterised by an almost complete lack of supporting evidence presented in print. In part this was a reflection of the defective nature of the evidence and simple lack of attestation for numerous languages. This is no longer the situation; we have at least significant comparative wordlists for all putative branches of Bantoid and grammatical descriptions of sample languages. The paper puts together this material to present a new 'tree' modeling the relations between the Benue-Congo languages and Bantu, including evidence for all the branches presently recognized. As a by-product, it presents a strong case for questioning the conventional Bantoid/Bantu distinction and indeed suggests that the time may have come to discard 'Bantu' as an analytic category.

Recent surveys of specific features of the Bantoid languages have paradoxically made it more difficult to establish genetic relationships. For example, although a few branches, such as Ekoid, retain a rich system of noun-class prefix alternations, in many other branches, it is fragmentary, or has disappeared. The proposed North Bantoid node, which would join Mambiloid and Dakoid, has lost noun classes, except for Nizaa. Perplexingly, Tikar has a system of affix alternations, but none of them can convincingly be mapped to those which characterize Bantu.

Similarly with phonology, some Bantoid languages, especially in the Grassfields, have extremely rich consonant and vowel inventories, while others, such as Dakoid and Tivoid, generally have reduced systems. It seems most likely the Grassfields systems represent secondary parallel evolution, resulting from segmental erosion, but this remains to be demonstrated. Bantu is normally reconstructed with neither labial-velars nor ATR vowel harmony, but both of these are present in Bantoid, possibly questioning reconstructed Bantu phonology.

Bantu is well known for its systems of verbal extension, yet in no part of Bantoid do such systems function in a similar manner. In most Bantoid branches, these are fragmentary and highly eroded. Moreover, it is extremely difficult, despite the formal resemblances to some Bantu A languages, to establish unambiguous semantics. Nonetheless, there are remarkable similarities with some northwest Kainji languages, suggesting these systems do have deep level reconstructions.

Overall, the poor levels of documentation of Bantoid and the lack of plausible mesolevel reconstructions is hindering the study of the relationship with both Benue-Congo and Bantu. It is to be hoped that further study in the coming years will remedy this situation.

Plenary 2

Bantoid lexical diversity from individual-based perspective

Jeff Good
University at Buffalo

This talk presents the initial results of research on the use of individual-based wordlists for the investigation of Bantoid linguistic diversity. More than 15,000 wordlist entries from fifty speakers of thirteen Bantoid linguistic varieties associated with the Lower Fungom region of Cameroon were collected. In order to allow for individual-level lexical variation to be analyzed, no attempt was made to standardize the wordlists across individuals, in contrast to typical practice. The communities of Lower Fungom are associated with extensive individual-level multilingualism, and sociolinguistic information was collected on the linguistic repertoire of each individual from whom the wordlists were collected as well. Arriving at a better understanding of the nature of lexical variation within the region has value both for the creation of a more accurate documentary record of the communities' speech practices and for understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics that have historically underpinned language change in Sub-Saharan Africa. By applying tools originally designed for cognate detection for historical linguistic purposes to questions of synchronic variation, it has been possible to assess the degrees of similarity and dissimilarity among Lower Fungom's linguistic varieties, observe where boundaries between varieties are more or less strongly defined, and explore which varieties are associated with greater degrees of individual-level lexical variation than others. The initial findings of this work suggest that an individual-based approach to wordlist collection is a promising tool for providing a snapshot of the structure of linguistic variation within an areally defined region and for determining which lexical items are salient local markers of linguistic distinctiveness, among other topics.

Parallel session talks

Remnants of nasal prefixes in Western Grassfields Bantu

Pius W. Akumbu & Jeffrey Wills
LLACAN (CNRS - INALCO), Paris & Ukranian Catholic University

Studies on Grassfields Bantu nominal morphology have often cast doubt on the presence of nasal prefixes in WGB. Those that have attempted to recognize the presence of such prefixes end up concluding that the nasals have undergone reanalysis as part of the stem and are now inseparable (Hyman 1979 for Aghem, Möller 2012 for Men, Tunviken 2013 for Moghamo, Anderson 2014 for Isu). In fact, the presence of nasal prefixes in Eastern Grassfields Bantu (EGB) and their absence in Western Grassfields Bantu (WGB) has been used, among other differences, to establish the distinction between the two groups of Grassfields Bantu. This paper illustrates that Babanki and other WGB languages display remnants of nasal prefixes in various lexical items. The presence of these remnants suggests that WGB languages also had the nasals seen in EGB.

References

Anderson, Stephen C. 2014. A phonological sketch of Isu. Yaoundé: SIL.
Hyman, Larry M. 1979. *Aghem grammatical structure*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.
Möller, Mirjam. 2012. The noun and verb in Mmen a Center Ring Grassfields Bantu language. Yaoundé: SIL.
Tunviken, Jonas. 2013. A phonological sketch of Moghamo, a Narrow Grassfields Bantu language. Yaoundé: SIL.

A preliminary reconstruction of Proto-Momo

Pius W. Akumbu, Rebecca Grollemund & Jeffrey Wills
LLACAN (CNRS - INALCO), Paris, University of Missouri & Ukranian Catholic University

This paper will focus on the study of Grassfields languages spoken in southwestern Cameroon, and more particularly on the Momo subgroup. Narrow Grassfields languages are generally divided into three subgroups (Watters 2003) with the Eastern Grassfields, Ring and Momo subgroups.

Within Grassfields Bantu, efforts to reconstruct proto-forms have been centered on the Eastern branch (Elias, Leroy & Voorhoeve 1984) and Ring in the Western branch (Hyman 2007, Paulin 1995), to the exclusion of the Momo which has been understudied historically. Using wordlists collected by the Grassfields Bantu Working Group in the 1970s, we explore lexical innovations and historical phonology. Our database is composed of 8-10 Momo languages documented for 175 words. For each word, we identified cognate sets. We then aligned the cognate sets phonemically in order to extract sound correspondences for consonants and vowels. Finally, we reconstructed proto-sounds and therefore proto-words for the Momo languages.

Our preliminary results show that there are two Momo subgroups distinguishable by phonological innovations: *d > l in Momo A and *d > n in Momo B. One distinctive trait of Momo is the use of [ɣ] as the hiatus filler after prefixes in vowel-initial nouns such as Moghamo [íɣə́] 'eye' (Proto-Grassfieds *íɡ̀) and [áɣɨ̄] 'thing' (Proto-Grassfieds *ú(m)`). We will also focus our attention on this interesting feature of this branch of Western Grassfields where *k and *g are undergo lenition when followed by the vowel *u. Finally, we will attempt to give an explanation to the evolution of the unusual vowels observed in these languages.

References

Elias, Philip, Jacqueline Leroy & Jan Voorhoeve. 1984. Mbam-Nkam or Eastern Grassfields. Afrika & Übersee 48: 31-107.

Hyman, Larry M. 2007. Index of Proto-Grassfields Bantu roots. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley.

Paulin, Pascale. 1995. Etude comparative des langues du groupe Ring - langues Grassfields de l'ouest, Cameroun. Lyon: Université Lumière - Lyon 2.

Watters, John R. 2003. Grassfields Bantu. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu languages,* 225-256. London: Routledge.

Towards reconstructing a Proto-Tivoid numeral classifier system

Michael T. Angitso & Roland Kießling
University of Hamburg

The Tivoid subgroup of Bantoid presents an incipient numeral classifier system with restricted lexical coverage, as attested for a number of various subgroups of the Benue Congo languages of Nigeria and Cameroon (Kießling 2018). Semantically, these classifiers categorize counted items for their shape and texture (e.g. oblong and rigid vs. flat vs. small and globular) as well as for their aggregation type (bundle vs. heap) and partition (half, piece) with an occasional conflation with the notion of counterexpectual scantiness. On the morphosyntactic and etymological level, they can be seen to develop from full-fledged generic nouns denoting concepts such as LEAF, SEED, FRUIT and HEAP used as head nouns in associative constructions. Eventual loss of nominal properties indexes an incipient functional split of the lexical source item and the newly emergent word class of numeral classifier. A comparison of numeral classifier systems in two Tivoid varieties, i.e. Tiv (Angitso 2020) and Ugare (Angitso & Kießling 2021), reveals both substantial overlap and variation. For example, cognate classifiers such as Tiv *ítíné* (5/6) and Ugare *ítín* (5/6), both used for counting longish outgrowths from a base and applicable to items like plantains and hair, allow for a Proto-Tivoid reconstruction, whereas non-cognates such as Tiv *ì-kʸé* (9/6) 'testicle' vs. Ugare *kù-kwà* (9/10) 'palm nut', both used for counting items such as mangos and cashews,

attest to the application of different cognitive models. Based on a comparison of the Tiv classifier system and its Ugare counterpart, the contribution explores the extent to which a numeral classifier system can be reconstructed for the Proto-Tivoid stage.

References

Angitso, Michael T. 2020. A descriptive study of the Tiv nominal morphology. Hamburg: unpublished PhD.

Angitso, Michael T. & Roland Kießling. 2021. 'Muscles of mussels' and 'hooks of bananas' - the (incipient) numeral classifier system of Ugare (Tivoid, Cameroon/Nigeria). Paper presented at the 24th Afrikanistentag, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, 1st – 3rd July, 2021.

Kießling, Roland. 2018. Niger-Congo numeral classifiers in a diachronic perspective. In McGregor, William B. & Søren Wichmann (eds), The Diachrony of Classification Systems, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 34-75.

On cognate objects in Ejagham

Gratien Atindogbe and Florence Tabe A. E.
University of Buea & University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

Cross-linguistically, cognate objects are *lexicalized light-verb constructions* whose postverbal noun phrases have a head noun that is morphologically or semantically cognate to the verb. The *surrogate* object NP is a nominalization of the related verb stem. The valence of the input verb, the noun phrase object, carries a referential index, which is identical to the verb to indicate correlation between the core lexical semantic contribution of the verb and the NP object. The paper examines the cognate verb-noun combinations in Ejagham, an Ekoid Bantu language spoken in South West Cameroon. It identifies and classifies the different types of cognate objects in the language based on their semantic or interpretive possibilities as events or objects, their syntactic distribution as postverbal arguments / complements of intransitive verbs and the selectional restrictions of the relevant NP in relation to definiteness and modifiers.

Phonological adaptation of loanwords in three Central Ring Grassfields Bantu languages of Cameroon

Esther Phubon Chie
University of Bamenda, Cameroon

When two languages come into contact, borrowing is likely to happen. Lexical borrowings, or loanwords, are by far the most commonly attested language contact phenomenon. This paper discusses the phonological transformation lexical borrowings undergo as they are integrated into the borrowing languages Kom, Babanki and Oku, three Central Ring Grassfields Bantu languages of North-West Cameroon. The discussion is based on a database of 200 items, which occur in all three (or sometimes only two) of the languages under study. While employing Language Contact and Language Change theories, the study examines the manner in which the English language, Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) and French loans are adapted to a new environment in these three Central Ring languages. The results show that the phonological changes which foreign words undergo when borrowed into Kom, Babanki and Oku are evident in a range of phonological processes such as sound insertion, initial vowel deletion, coda simplification, cluster simplification, and syllable insertion/deletion. In all, it is observed that, to a large extent, the loanwords violate the syllable structure and phonotactics of these three languages.

Time reference in Mambiloid

Bruce Connell
York University Toronto

Time reference in Bantoid, in particular the question of when tense as opposed to aspect took hold, is a matter of debate. The discussion has largely been fuelled by work by Nurse and Watters (Nurse 2007, 2008, Watters 2019); Nurse's work has focused on Bantu, while Watters has approached the question looking at Bantoid and beyond. With regard to Bantoid, and implications that findings there might have for Bantu, this work is hampered to some extent by a simple lack of information: too little data, from too few Bantoid languages are available. In this paper I hope to contribute to the time reference debate in Bantoid by bringing to bear data from Mambiloid, languages which thus far have been but little considered.

The Mambiloid languages are situated north of and adjacent to the Grassfields in Cameroon and across the border into Nigeria. The group comprises some 30 lects, most of which are either under described or undescribed with respect to their verbal systems. Those for which data relevant to the discussion of time reference are available include Kwanja (Weber 2004, Robson 2011), Mambila (Connell 2019, Meyer 1939-40, Perrin, 1994), Nizaa (Kjelsvik 2002), Vute (Thwing & Watters 1987), and Wawa (Martin 2012). For Mambila, data from four different dialects are available, which show some consistency in the realization of aspect, but less so regarding tense. Connell (2019) concludes that, given this variation, Mambila may have innovated tense. Mambila is compared with Kwanja, Wawa, and Vute, all tensed languages, but differences are found across this set of languages. The possibility of reconstructing time reference in Proto-Mambiloid and the implications this might have for understanding the evolution of time reference more broadly in Bantoid are discussed.

References

Connell, Bruce (2019). Tense and or Aspect in Mambila. Presented at ACAL 50, Vancouver, 25-29 May 2019.

Connell, Bruce & D. Robert Ladd (2020). *A study of Mambila. Emmi Meyer's Mambila-Studie. Translated, edited and updated to mark the eightieth anniversary of the original publication.* Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.

Kjelsvik, Bjørghild (2002). Verb chains in Nizaa. PhD, University of Oslo.

Martin, Marieke (2012) A Grammar of Wawa, an endangered language of Cameroon. PhD, University of Kent.

Meyer, Emmi (1939-40). Mambila-studie. *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen* 30, 1–52,117–148, & 210–232.

Nurse, Derek (2007). The emergence of tense in early Bantu. In Doris L. Payne & Jaime Peña (Eds.) *Selected Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. Pp. 164–179.

Nurse, Derek (2008). *Tense and Aspect in Bantu.* Oxford: OUP.

Perrin, Mona (1994). Rheme and focus in Mambila. In Levinsohn, S. (ed.) *Discourse Features of Ten Languages of West-Central Africa*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of Texas at Arlington, 231–241.

Robson, Laura (2011). Documentation of the Language Ecology of Njanga, a Moribund Language of Cameroon. PhD, University of Kent.

Thwing, Rhonda & John Watters (1987). Focus in Vute. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 9, 95–121.

Watters, John (2019) Proto-Bantu Tense from a Benue-Congo Perspective. Presented at ACAL 50, Vancouver, 25-29 May 2019.

Weber, Joan (2004) A Working Paper on Kwanja Grammar. Yaoundé: SIL.

Towards a spatial representation of societal and individual multilingualism
Reasons and models for innovating the linguistic cartography of Bantoid languages

Pierpaolo Di Carlo
University at Buffalo

Given their wide accessibility and use, also for educational purposes, language maps have significant reverberations on the "linguistic imagination" of their users. What language maps represent or not represent is constrained not only by the necessity of being clearly readable, but also by the ideologies of their creators. As a matter of fact, these two factors have led to the creation of language maps tending to oversimplify real-world situations to the point of reproducing an essentially romantic, stable vision of languages as non-overlapping, well-defined objects with precise locational and demographic attributes. A case in point is provided by the maps found in the Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2021) which are normally used as references by linguists.

While specialists may be aware of the reality on the ground and, therefore, able to take such maps with a grain of salt, the general public (importantly including junior or non-specialist researchers) may uncritically accept the distortions that they necessarily generate. One among the most relevant distortions is the erasure of multilingualism both at the societal and the individual level. In areas where multilingualism is both a pervasive and an age-old practice as in the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland (e.g. Connell 2009 and several chapters in Di Carlo and Good 2020), knowing which *languages* are and are not spoken in a given locale, for instance, is a type of datum that is likely to be of great relevance for the understanding of the local languages both in synchrony and in diachrony. Erasing multilingualism from language maps risks making them not just useless from a scientific point of view but deleterious because they are sources reproducing an epistemology that is far too simplistic to be adequate to the study of languages spoken in complex sociolinguistic situations such as is the case with many (most?) Bantoid languages.

But how to represent multilingualism? And in what ways can a language map become a scientific tool for linguists? This paper aims to provide initial answers to both questions through (i) an overview of prior attempts at representing multilingualism cartographically, (ii) a discussion of the ideological underpinnings of these earlier attempts and of their inadequacy for the representation of the traditional forms of multilingualism found in areas where Bantoid languages are spoken, and (iii) the presentation of some possible new cartographic models that have been explored in the KPAAM-CAM project (http://kpaam-cam.org) for the study of the languages of Lower Fungom (Northwest Region of Cameroon).

References
Connell, Bruce. 2009. Language diversity and language choice: A view from a Cameroon market. *Anthropological Linguistics* 51(2):130–150.
Di Carlo, Pierpaolo & Jeff Good (eds.). 2020. *African Multilingualisms. Rural cultural and linguistic diversity.* Lanham, MD: Lexington.
Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2021. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world. Twenty-fourth edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.

Accounting for focus marking strategies and focus sensitive particles in Fe'efe'e

Gabriel Djomeni & Justine Laure Lappi
University of Dschang & University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

In this study, we attempt to shed light on the strategies used to mark focus and the sensitive particles accompanying focus markers in Fe'efe'e, a Grassfields Bantu language spoken in the West Region of Cameroon. Based on natural data collected from active fieldwork and our native speakers' intuitive knowledge of the language, and following Rizzi (1997, 2004) who argues that the in-situ focus element moves to the CP-domain, and Hyman (2005) who states that the focus marker occurs in IP domain, we show that Fe'efe'e makes use of two main focus marking strategies, namely in-situ and ex-situ techniques. Furthermore, the study illustrates that the morphemes /mǎ/ and /tǎ/ trigger focus operations in the language. In case of further insistence, these two morphemes can be assisted by *kwɑ'* or *ndɑ'* considered to be focus sensitive particles or insistive/restrictive markers. The analysis of /mǎ/ and /tǎ/ shows that the focus markers play an important role in in-situ and ex-situ constructions. Morpho-syntactically, /mǎ/ takes scope over three constituents in a sentence: the subject, direct or indirect object, and the adjunct. The morpheme /tǎ/ occurs when a constituent in the rightward domain has moved to sentence initial position. Interestingly, more than one constituent can be focalised in-situ in the same construction. Furthermore, the two focus markers can co-occur in the same ex-situ syntactic construction where they dominate the moved-element. Both focused constituents and content words exhibit the same syntactic patterns in in-situ and ex-situ focus marking; i.e, the focused phrase and the question phrase must be preceded by a focus marker for focalisation to apply. It is worth noting that the association of the focus marker with the focus sensitive particles is not restricted to the in-situ and ex-situ focused phrase. In addition, the two distinct focus markers, together with the two focus sensitive particles (FSP) can co-occur within the same construction as illustrated in the example below.

matrix sentence: Ntǔkǒ zɑ́ kwɛlɛ'
                          Ntǔko eat plantain
                          "Ntuko ate plantain."
focus construction: Mɑ́ kwɑ' ndɑ̌' kwɛlɛ'   tɑ́ Ntǔkǒ zɑ̄.
                          FOC FSP-FSP plantain FOC Ntǔko eat
                          " That it is exactly only plantain that Tuko ate."

References

Hyman, L. 2005. Focus marking in Aghem: Syntax or Semantics? Paper presented at the Conference *on Focus in African languages*, ZAS, Berlin.

Rizzi, L. 1997. The Fine Structure of the left periphery. In Liliane Haegeman (ed.), *Elements of grammar*, 281-337, Dordrecht: kluwer.

Rizzi, L. 2004. Locality and Left Periphery. Ms. University of Siena.

Polyfunctionality of tones in the grammar and orthography of Fe'efe'e

Gabriel Djomeni & Justine Laure Lappi
University of Dschang & University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

One of the key challenges in analysing Grassfields languages is their complex tonal patterns and multiple functions of tone in the languages. This study particularly focuses on Fe'efe'e, an East Bamileke Grassfields language spoken in the Southernmost part of the Bamileke area. It builds on natural data collected in field and speakers' intuitive knowledge of the language coupled with classroom practices to argue that tones play a multifunctional role in the grammar and orthography of the language. Although this has already been pointed out by scholars working on tone languages notably across Bantoid and Bantu languages and even non-African languages, we pay special attention on Fe'efe'e in this study to unveil what peculiarities the language exhibits with regard tone behaviour. Without relying on any specific theoretical framework, the analysis exposes that at the level of the lexicon and grammar of the language, tone plays a distinctive function as already well-known in the literature, can be an associative marker, and coupled with segmental morphemes, is part of some tense markers. The distinctive and grammatical functions play a very important

semantic discrimination very relevant and useful in the orthography of the language. Though this is not new, illustrations from the Fe'efe'e language will help expand knowledge on the issue in Grassfields languages.

Phonetic detail and phonological analysis in Kom and Oku

Matthew Faytak
University at Buffalo

Attention must be paid to fine phonetic detail in the Bantoid languages, to avoid this detail being "filled in" using assumptions from an assumed areal profile. The latter analytical decision obscures the fact that there are numerous micro-areas within Bantoid, each with their own unusual phonetic properties. To demonstrate, I provide a case study of the vowels of Kom and Oku, two Central Ring languages (West Grassfields Bantu, Cameroon). Both languages have been analyzed as having vowel systems unremarkable in the Grassfields context: /i e a o u/ and a central vowel (/ɨ/ in Kom, /ə/ in Oku), with an additional front vowel /ɛ/ in Oku.

However, these analyses are erroneous, and hinge on an incorrect segmentation of apparent tautosyllabic C_1C_2V sequences in the languages. In these cases, C_2 were analyzed as labiodental or alveolar fricatives followed by a restricted set of central vowels (e.g. Kom /ī-mzɨ́/ 'throat', Oku /ē-kfə̂/ 'clan, family'). But these central vowels are in fact *fricative vowels*, meaning that the frication attributed to the C_2 in an onset consonant cluster is a property of the following vowel. Reanalysis yields two phonemic fricative vowels in Kom and one in Oku, and brings the consonant phonotactics in line with closely related languages such as Kejom (Babanki).

After reviewing the phonetic characteristics of the apparent C_1C_2V sequences that make the proper phonological analysis as C_1V clear, I consider the broader impact of adding additional phonetic detail to the descriptive "checklist" for Grassfields languages, and where this might best be attempted by researchers with limited experience analyzing audio data.

The variability of A'-agreement in Bamileke Medumba: A dialectal survey

Kathryn Franich & Hermann Keupdjio
University of Delaware & McGill University

Background. We present experimental results examining tono-syntactic variation in Bamileke Medumba. Specifically, we explore variability in judgments of Medumba speakers in the acceptability of tonal patterns associated with A'-agreement in several dialects of the language. A'-agreement, also known as wh-agreement, is the reflex of A'-movement of an XP (1a,b). It is realized in the Bazou dialect of Medumba as an HL tone melody that overwrites lexical tone of verbal heads (1b) as well as of temporal and aspectual auxiliaries (Keupdjio 2019). In the Bangangté and Bangoulap dialects of Medumba, speakers can sometimes produce wh- questions without the characteristic A'-agreement tonal pattern, instead realizing the verb (or auxiliary) with its underlying tone (in this case, high tone) (1c).

(1) a.   Wàtɛ̀t jún **á**   **wú**   á?
            Watat see   FOC   WH   C.Q.H
                   V.**H**
                 'Lit.: Watat saw who?'
        b.   **á**   **wú**   Wàtɛ̀t   júɨ̀n   á?
             FOC   WH   Watat   AGR.see. C.Q.H

V.**HL**
                    'Who did Watat see?'
    c.   **á**   **wú**   Wàtèt   jún   á?
            FOC   WH   Watat   see.   C.Q.H
                                               V.**H**
                    'Who did Watat see?'

Our research questions were: (i) do speakers of different dialects of Medumba uniformly accept the tone pattern found in (1a,b) in A' contexts? (ii) if not, is variability in judgments predicted by speakers' native dialect? (iii) how consistent are speakers of a given dialect in their judgments?

Stimuli. Stimuli consisted of recordings of wh- questions carrying tone patterns like those in (1b) and (1c) spoken by a male native speaker of Medumba. The syntactic contexts used for the study include (i) sentences like (1b,c) with the four verb tone classes of Medumba (CV_High; CVC_High; CV_Low; CVC_Low) and (ii) sentences in which the four verb tone classes were preceded either by a high or a low temporal auxiliary.

Methods. Data was collected through an online survey from 20 native Medumba speaker-listeners representing dialects from 7 different villages around Bangangté, Ndé Division, Cameroon. Participants first heard a soundfile of each sentence in isolation and judged its acceptability in a binary forced choice task. They then heard pairs of sentences differing only in tone pattern (e.g. 1b vs. 1c) back-to-back, and were asked to judge whether they would be likely to say the first of the two sentences, the second, both, or neither.

Results. Responses on the binary judgment task looked similar across dialects, and indicated listeners largely preferred the tone pattern in (1b) on wh- questions (Figure 1). Results from the paired sentence task revealed that participants from the Bazou dialect group were less accepting of the tone pattern in (1c) than were participants from Bangangté or Bangoulap villages; data from other dialect groups was limited to a single speaker and were more varied (Figure 2). Results also indicated that listeners were more likely to accept pattern (1c) where the underlying tone of the verb or tense marker was low. Our results speak to a complex interplay between dialectal and grammatical factors affecting listener judgments about tonal patterns in relation to A' agreement.
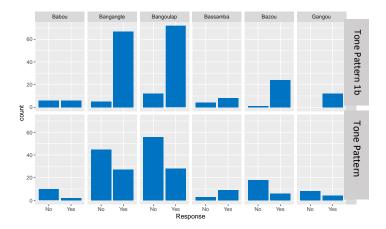

Figure 1: Tone pattern acceptability by dialect group: isolation/binary choice
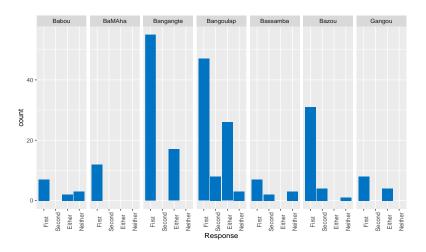
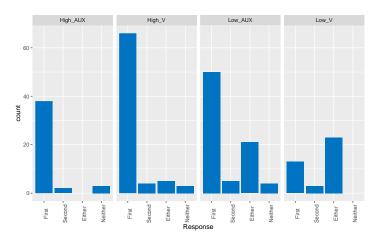Figure 2: Tone pattern acceptability by dialect group: back-to-back comparison

Figure 3: Tone pattern acceptability by dialect group: tone of verb/auxiliary

Reference: Keupdjio, Hermann. 2019. The syntax of A'-dependencies in Bamileke Medumba. UBC PhD dissertation.

On the place of Jarawan among Bantoid languages

Christopher Green & Rebecca Grollemund
Syracuse University & University of Missouri

Jarawan languages figure prominently into longstanding debates among Africanists concerning their classification relative to non-Bantu Bantoid vs. Narrow Bantu languages. Recent scholarship on the matter – namely Blench 2006, Grollemund 2012, and Grollemund et al. 2018 – contends, based primarily on what is known of their lexicon, that Jarawan belongs within Bantu Group A (specifically alongside Mbam-Bubi languages, A31-40-60), though perspectives on their precise place within the group differ between scholars. This paper, based on data collected over the last three years on Mbat [iso:bau] and more recently on Duguri [iso:dbm], calls into question such a determination, illustrating that although ~20% of the Jarawan lexicon is indeed cognate with Bantu, these same items are also cognate with Bantoid. This suggests, therefore, that these vocabulary items entered the lexicon via some pre-Bantoid proto language. We illustrate that there

are indeed no clear lexical innovations linking Jarawan to Bantu, including to any A40 or A60 languages. Any evidence presumed in favor of their inclusion in Bantu by vestigial nasal prefixes observed on some nouns can also be set aside, as these too are found in Eastern Grassfields languages (Hyman 1980, 2018). In further support of our determination that Jarawan languages are properly classified among other non-Bantu Bantoid languages, we present data on the Jarawan verbal system showing that the languages exhibit all and only those six verbal extensions that Hyman (2018) reconstructs for Proto-Grassfields. Furthermore, we show that these extensions are fully aspectual in the synchronic grammar of these languages, which in turn places Jarawan within "Stage 3" of Hyman's trajectory concerning the development of aspectual function from extensions earlier involved in valency changing operations. As such, Jarawan is perhaps a step beyond even some other Bantoid languages in this regard, as Hyman proposes that Bantoid languages, as a group, are "somewhere between Stage 2 and Stage 3" on this trajectory.

Focus in Nda'nda'

Gueche Fotso Hugues Carlos
University of Bamenda, Cameroon

This presentation describes how an element can be manipulated within the structure of a sentence in Nda'nda' in order to emphasize or give it prominence. To achieve this, attention has to be paid to the various means used by a Batoufam speaker to bring his listener to focus his attention on the constituent bearing the special information he/she wants to pass across. Five main strategies are used to highlight information in the language: prosodic focus, topicalization, cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions and the focus marker *ndà*'. Prosodic focus is specific in the language in that intonational prominence is achieved in peculiar ways depending on whether the focused element is a noun phrase, a verb phrase or a modifier. Topicalization is restricted to noun phrases and is achieved through contrastive topic and left-dislocation. A resumptive pronoun that varies depending on whether the focused element is human or non-human appears to fill the gap of the moved element. Proper nouns are left-dislocated in a way peculiar to Nda'nda' that is elaborated on and accounted for. While analyzing focus via cleft constructions we argue that there is similarity between the object cleft construction and the relative clause. The focus marker *ndà*' can be used to highlight either verb or noun phrases by expressing a kind of restriction with peculiar morpho-syntactic changes.

The impersonal pronoun in Grassfields and beyond

Cameron Hamm
SIL International

This paper will discuss the form and function of the impersonal pronoun found in many Grassfields languages and in some other branches of Bantoid.

Some characteristics of the impersonal pronoun in Chufie':

- always refers to third person
- indefinite (like the generic noun 'somebody', but a pronoun)
- has generic or impersonal reference
- can refer to singular or plural participants with one form
- refer only to humans
- its consonant appears to come from the noun class system (class 2 p/b)
- similar to 'one' in English or 'on' in French
- used for three principal reasons

- o where the agent is unknown
- o where the agent is well known
- o where the agent is irrelevant
- free (not bound) morpheme
- refers only to A or S ("subject") and never O arguments
- never refers to 1st or 2nd person (like some 'one' 'you' Eng. or '*on*' Fr.)
- do not function as demonstrative or possessive

While in Chufie' the impersonal third person pronoun has the same form as the regular 3rd person plural subject pronoun, it is usually not the case in related languages.

From noun class marking to plural marking. Evidence from Mambiloid and Grassfields for a diachronic universal

Liliane Hodieb
INALCO, Paris

Crosslinguistically, there are two prototypical systems of noun categorization: the numeral-classifier type and the noun class type (Dimmendaal 2000:214). The latter type is recognized as a typical feature of Bantoid – including Bantu – languages, although noun class systems are not homogenous in this group. While most Bantoid languages have a complete agreeing classification system like Kainji (Blench 2015) and Eastern Grassfields (or Mbam Nkam) languages, others have a nonagreeing system, Mambiloid being a case in point. Prefixed noun classes in this group have actually given way to suffixed plural markers (Thwing 1987, Martin 2012). Moreover, split agreement as defined by Aikhenvald (2000:30) is attested in Western Grassfields, where a tendency to shift to a plural marking is also observed (Hodieb 2020). Accordingly, the degree and nature of 'decay' in Bantoid noun class systems vary from one language or language group to another, and even within a group, discrepancies are noted.

In this paper, I argue that the different shapes of noun classes represent different stages of evolution from noun class marking to plural marking to split agreement and non agreement through grammaticalization. Based on evidence from Bantoid and non Bantoid groups like Gur, as well as non African languages such as German, I propose that in all likelihood, such a change would be a universal tendency or 'historical cline' (Hopper & Traugott 2003).

References

Aikhenvald, A. 2000. *Classifiers. A Typology of Noun Categorization Devices*. Oxford University Press.
Blench, R. 2015. The Bantoid Languages. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1-53.
Dimmendaal, G. T. 2000. Number Marking and Noun Categorization in Nilo-Saharan Languages. *Anthropological Linguistics*, Vol. 42, N° 2, pp. 214-261.
Joseph, B. D. 1995. Diachronic Morphology : An Overview. In *OSU Working Papers in Linguistics* 46, pp. 16-37.
Hock, H. H., Joseph, B. D. (eds.) 2009. *Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship. An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics 2nd Edition*. Mouton de Gruyter.
Hodieb, L. 2020. *Description du wushi, langue Grassfields du Cameroun*. Thèse de doctorat. Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales. Paris
Hopper, P. J., Traugott, C. E. 2003. *Grammaticalization 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin, M. 2012. *A Grammar of Wawa. An Endangered Language of Cameroon*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Kent.

Thwing, R. A. 1987. *The Vute Noun Phrase and the Relationship Between Vute and Bantu*. M.A. dissertation. The University of Texas at Arlington.

A first analysis of Mbula (Jarawan, Nigeria)

Dmitry Idiatov & Mark van de Velde
LLACAN (CNRS - Inalco), Paris

This paper will provide a basic grammatical analysis and typological characterisation of Mbula, a Jarawan language spoken at the confluence of the rivers Benue and Gongola in Nigeria. It is based on two weeks of field work with four native speaker consultants in Nigeria, which resulted in three transcribed and annotated short texts, a lexical database of about 1200 words and some grammatical data.

The Jarawan languages have been the subject of a number of small publications, usually based on a restricted set of lexical data (e.g., Maddieson & Williamson 1975; Lukas & Gerhardt 1981; Shimizu 1983), of which the transcription turns out to be only moderately reliable. For instance, Lukas & Gerhardt (1981) transcribe Mbula using three level tones, whereas it only has two, plus downstep.

We will provide a basic description of the segmental phonology and the tone system, including tone rules, of the nominal and verbal morphology, the main paradigms of pronouns and an analysis of clausal syntax. We will point out historical evolutions that can explain the patterns found in the contemporary language, such as the final negation marker *dàŋ*, which must be a reflex of an intensifier used in conjunction with a now disappeared original negation marker. Furthermore, we will especially concentrate on the strong typological differences between Mbula and the Bantu languages to which it is obviously closely genealogically related, discussing the emergence of new prepositions (one of which may be evolving into a verbal extension), pluractional verb forms and the absence of tense.

References:

Lukas, Johannes & Ludwig Gerhardt. 1981. Bemerkungen zur Sprache der Mbula (Jarawan Bantu, Nordnigerien). *Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von P. Anton Vorbichler* (Veröff. Des Inst. Für Afrikanistik Und Ägyptologie Der Univ. Wien), vol. 15; Beiträge zur Afrikanistik, #12, 71–90. Wien: Afro-Pub.

Maddieson, Ian & Kay Williamson. 1975. Jarawan Bantu. *African Languages/Langues Africaines* I. 124–163.

Shimizu, Kiyoshi. 1983. Die Jarawan-Bantusprachen des Bundesstaates Bauchi, Nordnigeria. In Rainer Vossen & Ulrike Claudi (eds.), *Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur in Afrika: Vorträge gehalten auf dem III.~Afrikanistentag, köln, 14./15.~Oktober 1982*, 291–301. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

On OV and VO at the Bantu/Bantoid borderlands

Elisabeth Kerr
Leiden University Centre for Linguistics

While most Niger-Congo languages have SVO word order (Good 2017), a few outliers display SOV patterns, either in restricted TAM combinations or across the board. These OV languages include a handful

of Northwestern Bantu languages of Cameroon (Tunen, Nyokon), Bantoid languages (e.g. Tikar), and broader Niger-Congo (e.g. Mande, Gur, and Kru languages) (Mous 2005, Hyman 2011, a.o.).

Given the VO syntax found in neighbouring languages, a core question is whether OV word order is innovative or conservative. There has been a long debate on this, although much less is said about Bantoid reconstruction than about (Proto-)Bantu or Proto-Niger-Congo. One hypothesis proposes SOV as the original word order in Niger-Congo (Givón 1975; Hyman 1975), another SVO (Heine & Reh 1984), and another an intermediary S-AUX-O-V (Gensler 1994; Gensler & Güldemann 2003). Work specific to Proto-Bantu has proposed that the SOV patterns are innovative (e.g. Mous 2005), but such proposals do not rule out SOV at an earlier stage and have also been critiqued (Hyman 2011). There is therefore much room for new insights through more detailed comparative work in the Bantu/Bantoid borderlands.

In this talk I will present an overview of OV patterns, providing new data from Tunen and Nyokon. I will explain the relevance of these Cameroonian Bantu languages for understanding the relationship between Bantu and Bantoid and for understanding syntactic change mechanisms. Specifically, I show how study of the S-TAM complex is significant for linking these patterns to S-AUX-O-V grammaticalisation theories, and I discuss the significance of information structure on object expression (cf Güldemann 2008).

References

Gensler, O. D. 1994. On Reconstructing the Syntagm S-Aux-O-V-Other to Proto-Niger-Congo. *Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: Special Session on Historical Issues in African Linguistics*, 1-20.

Gensler, O. D. & T. Güldemann. 2003. *S-Aux-O-V-Other in Africa: Typological and areal perspective*. Workshop on Distributed Predicative Syntax (S P O V X), 4th World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL), Rutgers University, June 2003.

Givón, Talmy. 1975. Serial verbs and syntactic change: Niger-Congo. In C. N. Li (ed.), *Word Order and Word Order Change*, 47–112. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Güldemann, T. 2008. Preverbal objects and information structure in Benue-Congo. In E. O. Aboh, Hartmann, K. & M. Zimmermann (eds), *Focus strategies in African languages*, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 83-112.

Good, J. 2017. Niger-Congo languages. In Hickey, R. (ed.) *The Cambridge handbook of areal linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP, 471-99.

Heine, B. & M. Reh. 1984. *Grammaticalization and reanalysis in African languages*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Hyman, L. M. 1975. On the change from SOV to SVO: Evidence from Niger-Congo. In C. N. Li (ed.), *Word order and word order change*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 113–147.

Hyman, L. M. 2011. The Macro-Sudan Belt and Niger-Congo Reconstruction . *Language dynamics and change,* 1:3-49.

Mous, M. 2005. The innovative character of object-verb word order in Nen (Bantu A44, Cameroon). *Studies in African comparative linguistics with special focus on Bantu and Mande*. Tervuren: MRAC, 411-24.

On locative reinforcers in Mɜ̀dúmbɐ̀

Constantine Kouankem
University of Bertoua, Cameroon

This article investigates constructions in which a demonstrative is combined with a locative reinforcer. From a descriptive point of view, I claim that the base structure of the demonstrative-reinforcer construction

in Màdúmbà is of the form N+Dem+Reinf and conveys a neutral reading. The Dem+N+Reinf structure, attested in most Romance languages, (Bernstein (1997), Nicolis (2008)) surfaces only in the context of a contrastive focus reading in Màdúmbà. I show that counter to Italian, Terenghi (2019), the expression of demonstratives in Màdúmbà is made up of two particles with no deictic compatibility. I further argue contra Bernstein (1997) and other related works that because the demonstrative is recoverable from the discourse, only the locative reinforcer is mandatory in a Màdúmbà demonstrative-reinforcer construction.

In Màdúmbà, the locative reinforcer has three forms depending on the distance between the speaker and the listener as illustrated in (1).

1) a. tə̂ntsə̀   yə̂n   **lì**
        calabash   DEM   here
        'this calabash'
    b. mìág mə̂n **lá**
        eyes   DEM here
        'those eyes'
    c. bún   cə̂n   **dín**
        children DEM   there
        'those children'

In all the examples above, Counter to demonstratives, the locative reinforcer does not indicate agreement with the φ-features. In most Grassfields Bantu languages, only the demonstrative determiner is used to specify proximity and distal relations. In Màdúmbà however, we need both the ordinary demonstrative and the locative reinforcer. More intriguing is the fact that the demonstrative determiner is optional while the locative reinforcer is obligatory. This is in contrast to Bernstein's (1997) assumption which stipulates that the presence of the reinforcer is contingent upon the presence of the demonstrative.

2)   a. Ho   letto quel libro lì   (di Gianni)
            Have.1s read   that book there of Gianni
        b. *Ho   letto il   libro lì   (di Gianni)
            Have.1s   read the book there   of Gianni

If the demonstrative is not present in an Italian demonstrative-reinforcer construction, then the structure is ill formed, (cf. 2b).

Màdúmbà shows the reverse in that the demonstrative can be omitted while the reinforcer cannot, as in (3).

3)   a. mìág lá   b. fù   dín
            eyes   there   medicine there
            'those eyes'   'that medicine'

References
Bernstein, Judy B. (1997). "Demonstratives and reinforcers in Romance and Germanic languages." Lingua 102.87-113. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0024-3841(96)00046-0
Lander, Eric and Liliane Haegeman. (2016). "The nanosyntax of spatial deixis." Studia Linguistica 2(1). 1-66.
Marušič, Franc and Rok Ţaucer (2012a). On Slovenian demonstrative reinforcers and the internal structure of demonstratives. Selected papers from SinFonIJA 3, ed. by Sabina
Halupka-Rešetar, Maja Marković, Tanja Milićev, and Nataša Milićević, 76-101. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
Nicolis, Marco (2008). Reinforcers in Italian: DP-internal and Left Peripheral**.**

Proceedings from the Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society, Volume 44, Number 1, pp. 195-210(16).

Putnam, Micheal (2006). Those There demonsratives- demonstrative reinforcer constructions. In Pennsylvania German. <u>Leuvensche Bijdragen</u> 95:159-177. DOI:<u>10.2143/LB.95.0.2033185</u>

Rauth, Philipp and Augustin Speyer. (2021). Adverbial reinforcement of demonstratives in dialectal German. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics 6(1):* 4. 1–24. DOI: <u>https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1166</u>

Numeral classifiers in Ngəmba

Solange Mekamgoum & Roland Kießling
University of Hamburg

In Ngəmba, a Bamileke language of the Eastern Grassfields group, spoken in the Western part of Cameroon (Bamendjou, Bameka, Bamougoum, Bafounda, Bansoa), there are items which require the association of extra elements in counting, i.e. numeral classifiers. These classifiers are of the sortal and mensural type and are selected according to semantic characteristics such as shape (round vs. long vs. flat), size (small vs. big) and aggregation (e.g. pod or bunch). This contribution focuses on the sortal type of numeral classifiers such as *tàʔ **njàŋ** nɔ̌ŋ thwó* 'one **string** of head's hair' and investigates their semantic and syntactic properties. It emerges that most of these numeral classifiers source from concrete nouns with relatively transparent etymologies, the majority of which retain their nominal properties, so that they can still function as full-fledged nouns.

"Incantors" and their incantations in the COVID-19 Era: A socio-pragmatic analysis of Ngemba incantatory poetry

Divine N. Ndimofor
University of Buea, Cameroon

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in all human societies the world over has gone beyond the spread of the disease itself. For this reason, mankind has developed new ways of doing things with words. This study investigates the incantatory poetry of the Ngemba people of North-West Cameroon. It explores various incantations enacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data used for this study is made up of 9 incantations (4 personal, 3 family, 2 communal) collected from rituals performed by Ngemba people. Using the Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962), the study examines illocution in the different incantations. The findings of the study show that the different 'incantors' make use of representative, commissive, directive, expressive and declarative speech acts.

Lexico-semantic and syntactic convergence and divergence between Ngiemboon and Ngomba

Herbert Rostand Ngouo
University of Maroua, Cameroon

While carrying out a study on language and technologies, we were interested principally in the usefulness and effectiveness of *Adapt it* (a translation memory) in the adaptation of the New Testament translation of the Bible from Ngiemboon (ISO 639-3, code nnh; Glottocode: ngie1241) into Ngomba (ISO 639-3, code jgo; Glottocode: ngom1272) (Eberhard et al 2019; Hammarström et al 2019). The endeavour would not

have been possible if there was no typological convergence between the two languages. Using the published New Testament texts in the two languages as the corpus, this study makes a comparative study of the syntax and lexis, highlighting the lexico-semantic and phonological, as well as syntactic convergence between the two closely related languages. The following corpus excerpt shows some structural convergence between the two Grassfields languages.

| Ngie | Kristo | la | gwɔ́ | tà | ńkwé | ḿbiŋ | ńzíme | nà | legwé, é |
| Ngom | Kɛlístɔ | ka | pɔ́ | tɛ | ḿpfú | ḿbɛn | ńzwǐimɛ | nǔu | nɛvú, ɛ́ |

| Ngie | cʉa | | ngù' | shŷɔ́'ɔ | tsɔ́ | wɔ́, | pùa | pá' | Akilas | lâ | Piriska, é |
| Ngom | lɛɛ | mɔ́ | ŋguˈ | yésúˈ | yɛcɔ́ | lá, | pʉɔ | páˈ | Akílas | pɔ́p | Piliiska,ɛ́ |

In the analysis of the corpus, we focus on lexicosemantic/phonological and syntactic convergence. While analyzing the cognates, we look at both the phonological structure of the words and their meanings. From the syntactic perspective, we look at corresponding sentence structures whose literal translation resulted in naturalness of meaning.

The results of the lexico-semantic analysis, on the one hand, shows a sizeable amount of cognates; on the other hand, even more importantly, there is significant syntagmatic coherence between the two languages. This study contributes to the ongoing research aiming at revisiting and/or confirming language families. In this regard, both languages share some structural properties, thereby confirming the classification that establishes them as belonging to the **wide** Grassfields Bantu subgroup (Chumbow et al, 2007).

References
Chumbow, Beban S., Gratien Atindogbe, Engelbert Domche, Dieudonne Martin Luther Bot. 2007. Classification of the languages of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea on the basis of lexicostatistics and mutual intelligibility. African Study Monographs, 28(4): 181-204.
Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-second edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com
Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. 2019. *"Ngomba"*. *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

The Relative Clause in Kenyang

Martha MBU NJUI & Théodore BEBEY
University of Maroua, Cameroon

This paper describes the phenomenon of relativisation in Kenyang, a Southern Bantoid language spoken in the South West region of Cameroon. Data collected from both primary and secondary sources and analysed using the descriptive and generative approaches reveal that with a special verb class, i.e. linking verbs, which predominantly carries given information in discourse, relative clause extraposition happens more freely. It is also seen that in simple sentences, the subject comes before the verb, whereas the direct object is post-verbal. As far as relativisation is concerned, the language has two types of relative clauses: subject relative clauses and object relative clauses. The structure of subject relative clauses is the same as that of simple clauses. Kenyang relativized constituents can move to sentence initial position or can be in-situ. Also important is the fact that the subject, direct object, indirect object and circumstantial components have the same behaviour when relativized. There is also a deference between relative pronouns and subordinating

conjunctions in the language and the relative pronoun can be deleted. Finally, the findings also show that the language equally makes use of multiple relative clauses.

Loanword adaptation strategies in Mbəkum

Sirih-Nagang Nancy Nyindem
University of Bamenda, Cameroon

This paper describes the strategies used to adapt loanwords from English or Cameroon Pidgin English into Mbəkum, a Grassfields Bantu language of North-West Cameroon. Borrowing is an unavoidable linguistic phenomenon experienced when languages come into contact and loanwords can be seen as evidence of language growth. This study examines the phonological processes involved in the domestication of these words into the receptor language. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation and a total of 70 words were elicited and analysed. The research reveals that the processes of substitution, preservation, deletion, epenthesis, importation, and suffixation were employed in the nativisation process. Furthermore, the study observes that loanwords into Mbəkum that do not correspond to its phonemic inventory and syllable structure are made to conform through adaptation strategies to attain the preferred syllable structure. This research will enable us to understand the variation and constraints expressed in the borrowing of words into Mbəkum which could further instigate broader research for generalization to be made on loanword adaptation in Bantu Grassfields languages of Cameroon.

Multilingualism in under-resourced languages for sustainable development in rural communities

Rachel Ayuk Ojong Diba
University of Buea, Cameroon

Cameroon, a central African country, is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in Africa with about 280 living languages, for an estimated population of 26,727,521 people. Cameroon is second only to Papua New Guinea in terms of its multiplicity of languages for a relatively small population. Contrary to popular opinion, multilingualism exists even in rural communities; in fact, it is even more intense. In Lower Fungom, an incredibly linguistically diverse rural community in the Northwest region of Cameroon, high rates of individual multilingualism are the norm; it is common to find individuals who use more than seven distinct native languages to navigate through their daily lives. However, this multilingualism is usually neglected as a resource by foreign experts in the transmission of knowledge in linguistically diverse communities such as Lower Fungom. In their attempt to transmit knowledge in almost all ramifications including in the global pursuit of sustainable development, experts foreign to the target community typically focus only on the 'understanding' of their message, meanwhile 'understanding' could be totally inconsequential as far as the acceptance of a people is concerned. Sustainable development with trends away from the (socio-cultural and linguistic) norms of a community would be a complete farce. This paper highlights two key features indispensable for development to be extended to rural communities in Cameroon and for it to be sustainable. These aspects are the active collaboration with community members to obtain culturally appropriate interpretations and the use of all the languages existing in the community in transmitting knowledge. Data for this paper comprises recorded natural speeches, interviews and observation notes due to prolonged stays in the area and resultant informal discussions with its indigenes. This study will add to the handful of studies on rural multilingualism, promote multilingualism that has become an endangered practice, and add to efforts of sustainable development in Cameroon.

The lyrics of traditional music in Cameroon- The case of Buu

Rachel Ayuk Ojong Diba
University of Buea, Cameroon

In Africa, we sing in a number of contexts. There are songs associated with birth, with initiation and puberty, betrothal, marriage, acquiring a new title or status, funeral and memorial celebrations. Traditional music in Africa is a cradle of knowledge; it is one of the largest resources for untapped information. Through these lyrics we can understand the values and believes of certain generations, as well as unspoken emotions of people. Traditional music in Cameroon thus provides a useful analytical tool for probing the emotions lodging in an individual and the relation between individuals in a group. It is true that the verbal aspect sometimes appears less developed, but African music is one of the most important kinds of African oral culture. However, it is not always recognized that these songs are of such obvious relevance. As such, the sociolinguistic analysis of these songs is lacking in African sociolinguistics scholarship. In Buu, in the Northwest region of Cameroon, women are typically not given a voice; they are most often not allowed to speak or have a say in many matters even concerning their lives. The lyrics of the songs they sing reveal a lot of information about their silent voices. This study seeks to examine through sociolinguistic methodology, the revelations brought out by traditional songs sang on occasions at memorial celebrations. Data for this qualitative study is a collection of songs performed by a group of about twelve women, recorded during a memorial celebration. Data also contained notes gathered from semi-structured interviews and observation. Conclusions were drawn based on more than forty sociolinguistic interviews carried out with individuals from Lower Fungom and observations made during several trips to Lower Fungom since 2015. The video recordings were made in 2019 and comprised a group of displaced women from Buu in Lower Fungom.

The monophonematic analysis of prenasal clusters deriving from the lexicalization of noun class prefixes in Bantoid languages: the case of Koshin ['Beboid' Bantu, Cameroon]

Ousmanou
University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

The phonological status of consonant clusters in general and prenasal clusters (homorganic sequences of a nasal consonant followed by an oral consonant) in particular is amongst the controversial topics in the phonology of non-well-described languages. In fact, as Creissels (1994: 106) highlighted, in African languages for example, there is a problem, especially of prenasalized consonants interpreted as syllabic onsets. The author suggests that, in a language where say, *mb* occurs as a syllabic onset at word initial position and where *m* and *b* can also be attested as isolated syllabic onsets within the same language, the monophonematic analysis of *mb* can be viable only if the nasal *m* cannot be isolated as a prefixal morpheme in the language and if the monophonematic interpretation entails somehow a significant simplification of the system.

In Koshin [Beboid Bantu, Cameroon], data collected from native speakers and analysed on the basis of the Basic Linguistic Theory (Dixon, 2010) reveal that the prenasalised clusters (mostly but not only deriving from the lexicalization of noun class prefixes) are attested, as well as the isolated nasal consonants, in syllabic onset slots. Besides, in some circumstances, nasal consonants can still occur as prefixal morphemes in the language. There are not enough minimal pairs including prenasalized clusters to testify their monophonematicity at the phonological portion of the language, but there are instances of morphological and syntactical evidence that clearly support the monophonematic analysis of these complex segments. Moreover, analysis from other Bantoid languages (Voorhoeve, 1980) strengthens the hypothesis that the monophonematic status of prenasalized clusters in Bantoid is sustainable. This sounds as a contradiction to Creissels' assumption, given that there is no way of considering the Koshin system with phonemic prenasalized clusters as simpler than the one without them.

As assumed by the Basic Linguistic Theory, the morphological and syntactical support to the monophonematic analysis of prenasal clusters reveals that languages are truly integrated systems in which each portion is related to the others and that no portion can be satisfactorily understood without taking into consideration the others.

References

Creissels, Denis. 1994. Aperçu sur les structures phonologiques des langues négro-africaines.
    Grenoble : ELLUG, Université Stendhal.
Dixon, R. M. W. 2010. *Methodology: Basic linguistic theory 1*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Voorhove, Jan. 1980. Noun classes in Adere. In Larry M. Hyman (ed.), *Noun classes in the Grassfields Bantu Borderland*: *Southern California occasional papers in linguistics No 8,* 57-72. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Department of Linguistics.

Isu Hybrid Adverbials: An Exercise in Modality and More

Ronald Schaefer & Francis Egbokhare
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville & University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Keißling (2004, 2011) has invigorated serial verb studies in Bantoid (Rolle and Hyman 2016), particularly for the type initially identified as modifying by Bamgbose (1974) and later as asymmetric by Aikhenvald (2006, 2018). In his analysis of Isu serial structures (East Benue Congo) Keißling identifies a class of words as hybrid adverbials (HA). Each either precedes or follows a verb, while manifesting some loss of verbal properties.

For this paper we explore Isu HAs that precede a verb and assess their relation to secondary concepts (SC) in Dixon (1991, 2006, 2010) and clausal qualifications (Q) in Nuyts (2005, 2006, 2016). Dixon's framework, informed by indigenous languages of Australia, centers on concepts that modify a primary verb. His Class A secondary concepts constitute six categories: Negators, Modals/Semi-Modals, Beginnings, Tryings, Hurryings, and Darings. Covering a nearly similar domain in SAE languages, Nuyts offers a hierarchical schema based on order and scope relations among categories of clausal qualification. The latter consist of Evidentiality, Epistemic Modality, Deontic Modality, Time, Space, Quantificational Aspect, Qualificational Aspect, and Parts of States of Affairs. Additionally, Nuyts advances Dynamic Modality as a subcategory of Quantificational Aspect but ultimately finds no place for Boulumaic Modality. He also fails to mention any category comparable to Dixon's Negators.

Forging a union of Dixon and Nuyts, we find that of 11 possible categories of SC/Q there are 6 evident in Keißling's analysis of Isu. The only ones not found in his database are Evidentials, Deontics, Time, Space, and Parts. There are two instances of tense (*mbvámí* 'right then', *sɨ̀ə̀* 'then') for which we posit a relative rather than absolute status. The greatest number of exemplars, six each, fall to Epistemic Modality (*mbáŋ* 'evidently', *ndwàm* 'absolutely', *tàʔà* 'probably', *nám* 'still, despite conditions', *mbɔ̀ŋ* 'even though', *ndzə̀m* 'truly') and Dynamic Modality (*ntwámíat* 'just then', *mbáb* 'quickly', *bɔ̀ʔ* 'earlier', *màŋ* 'only', *ndɔ̀ʔ* 'deliberately', *tsɨ́m* 'seriously'). Others reflect Qualificational Aspect (*kàm* 'again', *kwáʔí* 'reduced extent', *ŋgóŋə́* 'equally'), simple Quantificational Aspect (*ŋgé* 'very much', *ndə́ŋ* 'very much', *ɲáŋ* 'a bit', *bánə́* 'enough'), Boulumaic Modality (*kóŋí* 'instead'), and Negators (*tyìmì* 'improperly', *káŋə́* 'never').

Our category assignments are highly tentative, based solely on translations of Isu offered by Keißling. Some assignments surely require further investigation, e.g., *sɨ̀ə̀* as relative tense 'then, later on' or epistemic 'certainly.' Nonetheless, we can glimpse the potential value of comparative-historical research that would

encompass not only Bantoid but also Benue Congo. It would center on verb series elements and their form/function evolution toward categories of preverbal and postverbal grams. To this end, we briefly consider the relation of HA to word classes in West Benue Congo identified as auxiliary and preverb (Bamgbose 1967:18). It is preverbs that most clearly reveal similarity to HAs and provide evidence of verb status, exhibiting concurrent grammaticalization with extant verbs. In Edoid, auxiliaries and preverbs differ in their interaction with imperatives, which accept preverbs but reject auxiliaries. Preverbs, as with HAs, also differ along other dimensions: intra-category word order and qualification of clausal participant vs. clausal event.

References
Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2006. Serial verb constructions in typological perspective. In A. Y. Aikhenvald & R. M. W. Dixon (eds.), *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. 1-68. New York: Oxford University Press.
Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2018. *Serial Verbs*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Bamgboṣe, Ayo. 1967. *A Short Grammar of Yoruba*. Heinemann Books: Ibadan.
Bendor-Samuel, John. (ed.) 1989. *The Niger-Congo Languages*. New York: University Press of America.
Dixon, R. M. W. 1991. A New Approach to English Grammar, on Semantic Principles. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Dixon. R. M. W. 2006. Serial verb constructions: Conspectus and coda. In A. Y. Aikhenvald & R. M. W. Dixon (eds.), *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. 338-350. New York: Oxford University Press.
Dixon, R. M. W. 2010. *Basic Linguistic Theory Volume 2*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Kießling, Roland. 2011. *Verb Serialisation in Isu (West-Ring)*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
Nuyts, Jan. 2005. The modal confusion: On terminology and the concepts behind it. In Alex Klinge Henrik Høeg Müller (eds.), *Modality: Studies in Form and Function*. 5-38. London: Equinox.
Nuyts, Jan. 2006. Modality: Overview and linguistic issues. In William Frawley (ed.), *The Expression of Modality*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.
Nuyts, Jan. 2016. Surveying modality and mood: An introduction. In Jan Nuyts & Johan van der Auwera (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood*. 1-8. New York: Oxford University Press.
Rolle, Nicholas & Larry M. Hyman. 2016. Review of *Verbal Serialization in Isu (West-Ring) – a Grassfields Language of Cameroon*, by Roland Kießling, 2011, Koln: Köppe. *Linguistic Typology* 20.3: 675-685.
Schaub, Willi. 1985. *Babungo*. London: Croon Helm.

Greeting patterns in the Cameroonian Grassfields

Evangeline A. K. Seino
University of Bamenda

As it is worldwide, greetings constitute a norm and an integral part of communication in Grassfields communities of North-West Cameroon. Greetings play a key role in the stabilization of the society and the maintenance of social relations and tend to determine how people relate with each other. The aim of this study is to document how people greet at different times of the day and how they ask about the wellbeing of those they greet. Greetings take the form of questions and in some communities, people ask in the morning whether the person they are greeting has woken up from sleep, e.g. Meta in (1) while in other communities they ask whether the new day has come, e.g. Babanki in (2).

(1) Meta' greeting in the morning

A: *à*   *fə́*   *nɔ̀ʔ*
      2SG   AUX   wake up
      'Have you woken up?'

B: *èè,*   *à*   *nɔ̀ʔ*   *bə́ə̀*
      yes,   2SG   wake up
      'Yes, have you also woken up?'

(2) Babanki greeting from morning till noon

A: *ətʃú̌ʔ* *ə́*   *láyn*   *⁺lí* *à*
      day   SM   be(come) clean   P0   QUES
      'Is it day break?'

B: *ətʃú̌ʔ* *ə́*   *láyn*   *⁺lí*
      day   SM   be(come) clean   P0
      'It is day break'

The data reveals that specific patterns of mental representations regulate how periods of the day are conceptualized and divided, and determine how greetings are formulated.

The Structure of the Noun Phrase in Kom

James N. Tasah
University of Maroua, Cameroon

This paper sets out to investigate the structure of the Noun Phrase (NP) in Kom. It examines the morphological form of the noun as well as simple and complex noun modification. This investigation is crucial on the basis of the consideration that some scholars have paid less attention to the syntax of the noun and its dependents (Rugemalira 2007). An analysis of nouns in Kom will be carried out to show the morphological pattern and how nouns are classified in the language. The paper also looks at the Anaphoric NPs, Pronominals, and the functions of NPs in Kom which include NPs as subject, object, direct and indirect object, object of comparison, complement, accompaniment, and locatives. The analysis will result in the generalization of rules for the NP structure that can be captured and represented by tree diagrams, and the rule generated from the Kom NP reveal that it consists of an NP—Noun(N) Adjective(Adj) Determiner(Det) Prepositional Phrase(PP) and Relative Clause (Relc).

Reference
Rugemalira, M. J. 2007 The structure of Bantu Noun Phrase. SOAS Working Papers in Linguistics 15: 135–14.

Prolegomena to a history of Nizaa tonology

Rolf Theil
University of Oslo

Nizaa (**ɲanì nízʌ̀**), spoken in the west of Cameroon's Adamaoua province, has been classified as a Mambiloid language since Blench and Williamson (1987). Endresen (1990/1991) showed that Nizaa *segmental* phonology to a large extent is derivable diachronically from Proto-Bantu (PB), except for three PB innovations. This paper attempts to begin the historical study of Nizaa *tonology*, and to relate it to the H and L tones of PB.

Monosyllabic Nizaa *verbs* have a H tone or alternate M~L:

	'bite'	'buy'
Perfective	**lóm**	**gur**
Imperfective	**lṍw̃tʃǐ**	**gurtʃǐ**
Participle	**lṍw̃wâ**	**gùrwà**

These verbs are cognates of PB *-**dóm**- 'bite' and *-**gòd**- 'buy,' and many verbs show the same regular Nizaa–PB correspondences.

Noun tonology is more complicated, with ten lexical melodies:[1]

H	**tʃún** 'tree'	M	**ŋun** 'child'	L	**ɗùù** 'rabbit'
HM	**ɓów¯** 'dog'	M°	**ɓɯɯ°** 'head'	L°	**gòŋ°** 'elephant'
HL	**ʃʷáà** 'saw'	ML	**tʃʌ̃ʌ̀** 'guineafowl'	LH	**ɗǐw** 'face'
				LHM	**ɓɔ̃̌ɔ̃** 'egg'

HL and M are marginal melodies that are excluded from the present analysis. An attempt is made to derive the remaining melodies from the eight logically possible triplets of *H and *L in Pre-Nizaa:

H	< *HHH	M	–	L	< *LLL
HM	< *HHL	M°	< *HLH	L°	< *LLH
HL	–	ML	< *HLL	LH	< *LHH
				LHM	< *LHL

Each tone is postulated to have been associated with a separate syllable. For example, **tʃún** 'tree' is thought to come from Pre-Nizaa *í-kún-ó́; cf. PB *-**kóni** 'firewood'. The first and last syllables were later lost, but the tones survived. Some tonal changes then took place, such as:

- *HL > M / #_
- *L > M / H_#
- $*T_iT_i(T_i) > T_i$

The middle tone of the tone triplets was the root tone. Some evidence for this is found in deverbal nouns, where this middle tone was identical to the corresponding verb tone:

DEVERBAL NOUN	PRE-NIZAA	DERIVED FROM
LHM **mɛ̌ɛ** 'thought'	< *LH̲L **ò̀-mád-ó̀**	H **mɛ́ɛ́** 'think'
HM **tʃʷáa** 'death'	< *HH̲L **í-kúú-à**	H **kúú** 'die'
ML **ndʒə̀ə̀** 'braid'	< *HL̲L **ó́-ndʒèg-V̀**	M~L **ndʒəə** 'braid'
L **rìì** 'grave'	< *LL̲L **ò̀-rìì-ò̀**	M~L **rii** 'bury'

---

[1] ° represents a high tone that is not realized prepausally.

In some nouns, the lost initial syllable seems to have been a prefix that changed a root-initial consonant before disappearing – leaving segmental evidence for its earlier presence. Generally, Nizaa counterparts of PB ***k** and ***g** are **k** and **g**, cf. PB *-**kɔ́b**- 'hit' and *-**gàb**- 'divide' vs. Nizaa **kɔ́b** 'hit' and **gab** 'divide.' In some nouns, however, Nizaa has **ʧ** and **ʤ** instead of **k** and **g**, indicating "palatalization" after a lost prefix *__i__-, e.g.:

NIZAA	PRE-NIZAA	PROTO-BANTU
ʧún 'tree'	< *__í-kún-ó__	*-**kɔ́nì** 'firewood'
ʤàŋ 'root'	< *__ì-gàŋ-ó__	*-**gàŋgá** 'root'

These words also show root tone correspondence with PB.

References

Blench, R. & K. Williamson 1987. *'New' Bantoid.* Unpublished ms.
Endresen, Rolf Theil 1990/1991. Diachronic Aspects of the Phonology of Nizaa. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 12: 171–194. https://www.academia.edu/338463/

Numeral mutation typology in Lower Fungom languages

Nelson C. Tschonghongei
University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

The languages covered in this areal numeral mutation study are some Yemne-Kimbi (Good et al 2011) also referred to as Western Beboid (Hombert 1980). These varieties are spoken in Lower Fungom in Menchum Division of the North West Region of Cameroon.

This paper examines the numbers 1 to 10 that undergo mutation when these numbers are acting as head noun modifiers or determiners. This study adds to the morpho-phonological study of numerals within Cameroon following a descriptive approach. Data comes from two consultants from each of the languages.

This study seeks to understand why certain numerals changes depending on the class of the noun they modify. The findings reveal that, typologically, the 13 languages studied here falls into two of the three categories exhibited by numeral mutation (NMT): -NMT (minus numeral mutation), +NMT (plus numeral mutation), ±NMT (plus and minus numeral mutation). In addition, only certain noun classes allow numeral mutation in numeral mutation languages.

In literacy, it guides the learners when to change the pronunciation and the spelling of a number which is often different when the numbers are pronounced in isolation.

Typological limits of enumerative prefixes in the Beboid language family

Nelson C. Tschonghongei
University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

The speech varieties covered in this areal concord and taxonomy study are some Eastern Beboid (Hombert 1980) and some Yemne-Kimbi (Good et al 2011) also referred to as Western Beboid (Hombert 1980). These varieties are spoken in Menchum, Ndonga Mantung, and Boyo Divisions of the North West Region of Cameroon. Most studies on numerals have dwelled on simply counting, but this paper goes beyond counting to include the presence of agreement marking (concord marker) generated by the head noun on the numbers.

Furthermore, the agreement makers have been found to vary from language to language groups or language family. For the varieties within Yemne-Kimbi we have seen that the concordial system is uniform for all the seven varieties (Abar, Ajumbu, Buu, Fang, Biya, Misson, Munken, and Ngun). Similarly, as one of several means to deepen our insight into the genetic affiliation of the Mbuk speech variety, an areal study of the limit of concordial markers within numeral 1 to 10 have been undertaken. The outcome reveals that speech varieties with similar noun class patterns correlates with the limit of concordial markers. The study is based on a video recording of middle-ages speakers (25–55) who using the formula NOUN+(CONCORD)+NUMERAL.

The Mbe verbal system within the Ekoid-Mbe Group

John Watters
SIL International

The purpose of this study is to present the Mbe verbal system and to do so in relation to current knowledge about verbal systems within the larger Ekoid-Mbe group and Bantoid more widely. Pohlig (2012, 2013, n.d.) analyzes the Mbe verbal system as a tense-aspect system. This is a common analytical choice among linguists for languages of the western Bantoid region, given the dominance of English as the language of wider communication in the region, with its tense-aspect system. Also, mentioning the term 'Bantoid' raises the well-known presence of the Bantu languages, part of Bantoid and rich in tense-aspect systems (Nurse 2008). Speakers of languages in this region reasonably seek to make their verbal system correspond to the English verbal system.

Pohlig's analysis of the Mbe verbal system contrasts with Watters' analyses of Ejagham (1981, 2010, 2012b, 2017, and 2018a), another Ekoid-Mbe language. Ejagham clearly uses an aspect-prominent verbal system with no morphological marking of tense. In addition, Bakor, another major branch of Ekoid-Mbe involving some five languages, is similar to Ejagham, as represented by the Nkim and Nkum (Nkim –Nkum Language Committee 2016). Both languages use aspect-prominent verbal systems. Ejagham and Bakor would suggest that Proto-Ekoid-Mbe was an aspect-prominent language. Furthermore, aspect-prominent verbal systems are common in the larger western Bantoid region (Nurse & Watters forthcoming 2021?, Nurse & Watters forthcoming 2022?; Watters 2012a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019, forthcoming 2022?). So within Ekoid-Mbe and the larger Bantoid region, is Mbe an emerging tense-aspect language or an aspect-prominent language like the other Ekoid-Mbe languages? Experience with five Mbe translators brings Pohlig's analysis into question (Mbe Language Committee 2016).

References
Mbe Language Committee 2016. Okuǒ le onyuanú Mbe (Reading and writing Mbe). Mbe, Ogoja, Cross River State, Nigeria: Mbe Language Committee.
Nkim-Nkum Language Committee. 2016. Ikokog ne inyonyon nyo ba Nkem. Nkogo ne nnyono ngo ba Nkəm, (Reading and writing Nkim-Nkum.)
Nurse, Derek. 2008. Tense and Aspect in Bantu. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Nurse, Derek & John R. Watters. Forthcoming 2021? Tense in Proto-Bantu. In Koen Bostoen, Sara Pacchiarotti, Rozenn Guérois, and Gilles-Maurice de Schryver, *On Reconstructing Proto-Bantu Grammar,* Niger-Congo Comparative Studies. No. 4. Berlin: Language Science Press.
Nurse, Derek & John R. Watters. Forthcoming 2022? Plotting the orgins of tense in Bantoid. In Rebecca Grollemund, Derek Nurse, & John R. Watters, *Bantoid and Bantu in Cameroon: An Historical Re-Assessment.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Pohlig, James N. n.d. Class 1 verbs, positive paradigm and negative paradigm, Mbe. ms.

Pohlig, James N. n.d. Paradigm of verb TO BE, positive and negative, Mbe. ms.

Pohlig, James N. 2012. Particles and punctuation in Mbe. ms.

Pohlig, James N. 2013. A synopsis of Class 2 verbs, Mbe. ms.

Pohlig, James N. 2013. Model verbs in Mbe. ms.

Watters, John R. 1981. *A phonology and morphology of Ejagham.* Los Angeles: University of California dissertation.

Watters, John R. 2010. Focus and the Ejagham verb system. In Ines Fielder & Anne Schwarz (eds.), *The Expression of information structure: A documentation of its diversity across Africa,* 349-376. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Watters, John R. 2012a. Towards the reconstruction of the tense-aspect-mood (TAM) system in early Bantoid, with particular attention to the category "tense." *Paper presented at the First Proto-Niger-Congo Congress, Paris.*

Watters, John R. 2012b. Tone in western Ejagham (Etung): Lexical tone on the "minimal" verb forms. In M. Brenzinger & A.-M. Fehn (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of African Linguistics, Cologne, 17-21 August 2009,* 309-319. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

Watters, John R. 2017. Tone in western Ejagham (Etung): Lexical tone on verbs with the perfective constituent focus suffix. In Gratien G. Atindogbé & Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka (eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th World Congress of African Linguistics, Buea, 17-21 August 2012,* Volume 2, 930-947. Mankon, Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing CIG.

Watters, John R. 2018a. Ejagham without tense: implications for Proto-Bantoid. In Eugene Buckley, Thera Crane, & Jeff Good (eds.), *Revealing structure: papers in honor of Larry M. Hyman,* 253-265. Stanford: CSLI Publications.

Watters, John R. 2018b. Proto-Bantu tense from a Benue-Congo perspective. *Paper presented at the International Conference on "Reconstructing Proto-Bantu Grammar,"* University of Ghent, Belgium.

Watters, John R. 2018c. East Benue-Congo. In John R. Watters (ed.), *East Benue-Congo: nouns pronouns, and verbs,* 1-26, Niger-Congo Comparative Studies No. 1. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Watters, John R. 2019. Tense in Bantu, Bantoid and Benue-Congo. *Paper presented at the 50th Annual Conference on African Linguistics,* University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Watters, John R. forthcoming 2022? Tracing exponents of perfective, imperfective, and retrospective aspects through Bantoid to Bantu – and the implications for Bantoid history. In Rebecca Grollemund, Derek Nurse, & John R. Watters, *Bantoid and Bantu in Cameroon: An Historical Re-Assessment.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Verb extensions in Ghɔ̀málá́ʔ

Wega Simeu
University of Bamenda, Cameroon

This paper presents an overview of the suffixes known as verb extensions or verb derivations in Ghɔ̀málá́ʔ, a Grassfields Bantu language, spoken in the West Region of Cameroon. The research problem in this article is that Ghɔ̀málá́ʔ being a Grassfields Bantu language, has a very limited and peculiar verb extensions system so that it can hardly be classified as a typical Bantu language, neither is it a non-Bantu language. The paper focuses on the fact that, historically, the language has undergone many morphological and syntactic changes. The survey and the data collection took place in Batié. About 1,000 verbs were collected using a word list and transcribed in a note book using the International Phonetic Association (IPA) symbols. The data were analysed using the Basic Linguistic theory (Dixon 2010) and Structuralism (De Saussure 1916). The relevant fact brought out in this paper is the phenomenon of grammaticalization of the derivative

suffixes that has converted all the historical Bantu derivative suffixes into new grammatical suffixes. This entails the reduction of the number of the suffixes known as verb extensions to only 04 in the language, and this is very uncommon in Bantu languages.

The Proto-Bantu loss of Proto-Bantoid *ŋ

Jeffrey Wills
Ukranian Catholic University

Bantu and Bantoid historical linguistics have lately reached the stage where there is great interest in phylogenetic trees and branching, mostly based on lexical data. But, from the viewpoint of the comparative method, the proposed nodes and branches would be more certain if the cluster of innovations they signal also included phonological or morphological changes. The goal of this paper is to try to place on the tree an early phonological change: the loss of the velar nasal at an early stage of Proto-Bantu.

De Wolf (1971) was possibly aware of this phenomenon because he distinguished PBC forms reconstructed with *ŋg* from those with simple *ŋ*. The former usually have descendant PB forms in *ŋg, whereas the latter usually have a zero reflex in PB. For example, PBC *-*kaŋga* 'guineafowl' > PB *kángà* shows continuity, whereas PBC *tuŋi 'ear' > PB *tʊ̀ì* shows loss. Then Dimmendaal (1978) specifically noted the regular correspondence between stem-medial and stem-final *ŋg* in Proto-Upper Cross and ø in Proto-Bantu and gave several examples like PUC *dáŋ 'louse' ~ PB *dá. He concluded, "The absence of */ŋ/ in PB can thus easily be explained as an innovation. This innovation could be used for sub-classification (i.e., as a criterion for defining a (very large) subgroup within Broad Bantu)."

The first part of the paper presents a dozen clear examples of the presence of the velar nasal in various Bantoid-Cross ("Cross-Congo") languages and discusses a few uncertain cases. To clarify the phonemic status of the simple velar nasal in Proto-Bantoid-Cross, cases of prenasalized velar stops (*ng/ŋg) are also studied.

The second part of the paper tries to determine the historical stage at which this loss happened. In particular, the rare examples of the preservation of the velar nasal in parts of NW Bantu (e.g. A45 Nyokon ù-tɔ́ŋ 'ear') are examined. Because of the loss or reduction of a root's final syllable or consonant in many Bantoid and NW Bantu languages, one must determine whether the absence of the velar nasal in a language is due to a particular phonemic loss or a more general change.

The conclusion is that the loss of the velar nasal was not fully effected in the groups of Jarawan + A10-70 languages which form the first branch of the Bantu phylogenetic tree in Grollemund (2015). Accordingly, a phonological innovation can be added to the lexically based case for a significant division that separates off some Bantu Zone A languages from the rest of Bantu. Finally, a couple of the relevant lexical innovations are presented to support this demarcation of "wide" and "narrow" Bantu.

References

De Wolf, Paul. 1971. The noun class system of Proto-Benue-Congo. The Hague: Mouton.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 1978. The Consonants of Proto-Upper Cross and their Implications for the Classification of the Cross River Languages. Scriptie, University of Leiden.

Grollemund, Rebecca, et al. 2015. Bantu expansion shows habitat alters the route and pace of human dispersals. *PNAS*, 112. 13296-13301.