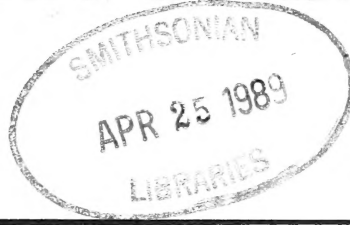


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French in Côte d'Ivoire: A Process of Nativization

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Introduction

The revival of Francophonie has renewed interest in the study of French outside of France. In recent years, linguists, educators, and the public have focused considerable attention on Ivorian French, the “non-native” variety of French in Côte d'Ivoire.¹ However, the misconception remains that French is the dominating medium for interethnic communication in the country.

This paper describes the sociolinguistic picture of Côte d'Ivoire with regard to French and provides a better understanding of the place and role of Ivorian French. It also shows how Ivorians bend the French language to suit both their communicative needs and cultural schematas.

French in Côte d'Ivoire

At independence in 1960, the diversity of the local languages and the prestige of French led to the adoption of the latter as the national and official language of Côte d'Ivoire. French was not only perceived as a neutral language, it was also considered a proven medium of science and technology. To date, although, it has neither substituted the local languages in everyday face-to-face interactions nor spread in its standard form to the masses—only 10 percent of the total population of Francophone Africa actually speaks French, all varieties included²—the prestige of French has helped in its maintenance and in the development of a number of “non-native” varieties.

Manessy (1974, 1978) subdivides Ivorian French into three major varieties: (1) the French of the elite, a variety similar to the standard, (2) the French of the educated, and (3) the French of the less educated or Popular French,

also called "français de Moussa", "petit français", or "français de Treichville".³ Lafage (1982:19) adds that the French of the elite is only spoken by 0.5 percent of the total population, the French of the educated by 5.3 percent, and Popular French by 29.2 percent. More recent studies suggest that the proportion of Popular French is rapidly increasing (Djité forthcoming; Hattiger 1983).

Hattiger (1983:51–53), along the same lines, subdivides Ivorian French into: (1) the French of the radio, which serves as a model for the populations, (2) the French spoken in professional situations, which is limited to the domains of the office, the workplace, and to bargaining between the Europeans and Africans in the marketplace, and (3) Popular French, a variety which covers all domains of everyday life.

While his description of (3) (i.e., Popular French) is in line with most other research on Ivorian French, the characterizations of (1) and (2) are not totally accurate. With reference to (1), Hattiger implies that French is learnt through the radio. It is not clear how the populations, most of whom do not read or write French, can learn the language in this informal way. It is important to realize that this is a context in which the radio also serves the social function of showing off one's material possessions and of postulating for some kind of socioeconomic achievement. Thus, the radio is not, in most cases, for one to listen to but for others to see.⁴

Moreover, since (2) is the French spoken for professional situations, one would expect it to be used on radio. However, because it is further described as a variety in which there is a great frequency of imperative verbal phrases, creativity, tones and argotic lexical items and a systematic use of deixis (i.e., non-verbal and gestural language), it is not adequate for such use. Again, there is a gross underestimation of the verbal performance—and even of the competence—of the Ivorian "professional" here. Clearly, the variety used in the office domain is not the same as that which is used on the marketplace and the two cannot be equated.

What these subdivisions have in common is that they all reflect the socioeconomic stratification in Côte d'Ivoire. The description of each variety is made along the lines of social (elite, educated, less educated) rather than linguistic variables. The more prestigious varieties are associated with the elite stratum, while the less prestigious ones are associated with speakers from under-privileged, low-status groups.

A Continuum of Varieties

The problems of clearcut subdivisions and adequate descriptions bring to light the fact that all these varieties of French are not discrete but rather points on a continuum (Manessy 1984:14). In fact, it is difficult to establish a clear linguistic break between Standard French (i.e., the norm) and the French of the educated for instance, or the French spoken in professional situations and Popular French. Only at each end of the continuum can distinct varieties, sometimes not mutually intelligible, be isolated.

The varieties on the continuum may be part of the verbal repertoire of the same speaker. In that case, code-switching from one variety to the other is possible whenever the situation requires it. The use of any of these varieties in a given context is more a matter of appropriateness rather than correctness. While the less educated speaker is likely to produce deviant structures in attempting to speak (Standard) French, the educated speaker is equally likely to perform poorly in Popular French. Nevertheless, only the use of the "wrong" variety in a situation will constitute a social faux pas.⁵ Thus, even when the verbal repertoire of the speaker encompasses all the varieties on the continuum, his/her actual performance is constrained by other social variables such as the level of education, the domain of the interaction, and the interlocutor.

In Ivorian French, there are at least five points on the continuum. In addition to the varieties mentioned above, there are two others: the Nouchis and a student idiolect which bears no name. Like Popular French, the Nouchis is attested in the local press (*Ivoire Dimanche*). Both are used by small speech communities (groups of friends living in the same quarter or on the same campus) to express a (transitory) group identity. Together with Popular French, they are dynamic and innovative varieties of French.

The Process of Nativization

This broad range of "non-native" varieties attest to the linguistic phenomenon of nativization in Côte d'Ivoire. Kachru (1981:15–39), with reference to (World) English defines nativization as the "systematic changes that have occurred in the phonological, lexical, syntactic, discoursal, and stylistic features of English that deviate from established "native speaker" varieties". I believe this useful concept can be extended to the description of the evolution of French outside of France. The Francophones, like their Anglophone counterparts, have adapted the French language to their own expressive needs. In the words of Manessy and Wald (1984:13).

Tout leur effort tend à modeler cette forme sur son contenu, c'est-à-dire à adapter la langue française à des manières de sentir et de concevoir proprement africaines. . . . Le français en Afrique serait déjà devenu en fait un français africain.⁶

Ivorian French however could not (yet) be described as a totally nativized form of French. It is an ongoing process that has not yet crystallized (Manessy and Wald 1984; Hattiger 1983).

Victim of social prejudice early on, perceived as the dialect of the poor, the uneducated and the unambitious, Ivorian French has established itself in recent years as one of the two major *linguae francae* in Côte d'Ivoire.⁷ Even the elite and the international community are now learning this "non-native" variety in order to become fully functional in this society. In fact, it is almost

fashionable today in Côte d'Ivoire to be able to speak a "non-native" variety of French, and Ivoirians no longer feel embarrassed to use it. The pressure to conform to the norm is progressively decreasing.

Features and Functions of Ivorian French

Nativization has generally been attributed to transfer from speakers' other language(s) and simplification or overgeneralization of rules from native speaker varieties. Some of these processes are illustrated below in Popular French:

- (1) Popular French: Tu veux *mouiller mon pain*.
 French: Tu veux me créer des ennuis.
 English: You want to make trouble for me.
- (2) Popular French: Tu veux *manger ton piment dans ma bouche*.
 French: Tu veux me créer des ennuis.
 English: You want to make trouble for me.
- (3) Popular French: *Ancien du feu* (pour allumer c'est pas fort).
 French: Il est facile de raviver un vieil amour
 English: It's easy to rekindle an old flame.
- (4) Popular French: Cabri mort (n'a pas peur de couteau).
 French: Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreille.
 English: It's no use preaching to a hungry man.

Clearly, transfer from speakers' other language(s) is operating in all the examples above. The problem is to pinpoint which specific language is being resorted to. In his extensive study of Popular French, Hattiger (1983) makes the point that it is difficult to show the source of transfer in a multilingual situation. In addition, most of the written texts in Popular French are artificial reconstructions and stereotypical approximations of the spoken language (Duponchel 1979:403-411). "La Chronique de Moussa", "Dago", "Zézé" of *Ivoire Dimanche*, the comic strip *Zazou*, the tape-recorded materials of L'Abbé Paul Kodjo ("Le Saint Homme Job", and "La Création") and similar works are deliberate attempts by some intellectuals to give a picturesque distortion of Popular French (Duponchel 1979:405). Their main purpose is to achieve a comical effect. Needless to say, they are not authentic representations of the variety. No one in real life speaks like the characters in these texts.

With this in mind, it is easy to understand the strong reactions from teachers, educators, and parents when the first issues of "La Chronique de Moussa" came out in the early seventies. They were objecting to what they considered a degenerate, careless and dangerously corrupted form of French and they feared that it could negatively affect the acquisition process of their children.

Some examples of such stereotypical distortions are shown below:

- (5) Popular French: *Lé Dié, i lé prend cinq la journée . . .* (La Création)
 French: Dieu prit cinq jours . . .
 English: It took God five days . . .
- (6) Popular French: *i voyé dormiment lé Adam.* (La Création).
 French: Il vit Adam en train de dormir
 English: He saw Adam sleeping
- (7) Popular French: *A condé qué i lé content trop.* (Le Saint Homme Job).
 French: Parce qu'il était très content.
 English: Because he was very happy.
- (8) Popular French: . . . si les *yous* i tyaient les *bris*. (La Chronique de Moussa)
 French: . . . si les policiers tuaient les brigands.
 English: . . . if the policemen killed the robbers.

In (5), three articles have been inserted before a unique lexical item (Dié), a verb (prend), and a lexical item modified by a quantifier (cinq jours). In (6), an article has been inserted just before a personal noun (Adam). This shows disregard for the genuine processes that actually occur in Popular French. As a general rule, Popular French would delete (and not insert) the articles of the standard form of French. In (6), (7) and (8), the productive process of lexical creativity is erroneously exaggerated. The authors often have to explain such lexical items in footnotes. These examples show that the general beliefs about Popular French, and Ivorian French for that matter, are not always true. Deviations from the norm in Ivorian French (e.g. article deletion, amalgamation, use of resumptive pronouns and of double emphasis) are fairly limited and generally predictable.

In comparison with Popular French, the Nouchis and the student idiolect have received less attention. *Ivoire Dimanche* has only started publishing short dialogues in Nouchis in 1987. Both of these varieties are mainly characterized by their creative lexicon. Examples of Nouchis below are a good illustration of that creativity:

- (9) Nouchis: *J'ai lorgné ta go ce matin.* (*Ivoire Dimanche*, n° 864, 30/8/87)
 French: J'ai vu ta copine ce matin.
 English: I saw your girlfriend this morning.
- (10) Nouchis: *Son grand frère voulait me kourou hier.* (*Ivoire Dimanche*, n° 864, 30/8/87)
 French: Son grand frère voulait me battre hier.
 English: Her older brother wanted to beat me.
- (11) Nouchis: *Son vieux est déjà venu pour m'embiancer . . .*
 (*Ivoire Dimanche*, n° 864, 30/8/87)
 French: Son père est déjà venu me faire des reproches
 English: Her father has already come to scold me . . .

- (12) Nouchis: Il est tout de suite devenu *cool*. (*Ivoire Dimanche*, n° 864, 30/8/87)
 French: Il s'est tout de suite calmé.
 English: He calmed down right away.

While the words "go" (girlfriend), "kourou" (beat), and "cool" (calm down) are borrowings from other languages, "lorgner" (to see), "vieux" (father), and "embiancer" (to scold) are French words that have taken on new meanings. This is one of the reasons why the "non-native" varieties can be unintelligible to the native speaker of French. Lexical creativity is also used extensively in the student idiolect as shown from (13) through (18):

- (13) St. Idiolect: Les politiciens *se mettent au beurre*
 French: Les politiciens vivent dans le luxe
 English: The politicians live in luxury
- (14) St. Idiolect: Elle est allée voir son *grimpeur*
 French: Elle est allée voir son copain
 English: She went to see her boyfriend
- (15) St. Idiolect: Il aime faire *le caïman*
 French: Il aime étudier sérieusement
 English: He likes to study hard
- (16) St. Idiolect: Où est *le chief-talker*?
 French: Où est notre ami le bavard?
 English: Where is our talkative friend?
- (17) St. Idiolect: *La semaine noire* commence demain
 French: Les examens commencent demain
 English: The examinations begin tomorrow
- (18) St. Idiolect: Ta soeur devrait se mettre au régime, elle est trop *nombreuse*
 French: Ta soeur devrait se mettre au régime, elle est trop grosse
 English: Your sister should diet, she's too fat

Again, French lexical items are adapted and given new meanings in (13), (14), (15), (17), and (18). In (16), "chief-talker" is an amalgamation of the English words "chief", reinterpreted here to mean "friend", and "talker", a shortened form for "talkative".

This lexical creativity is a very dynamic and ongoing process. New words are continuously being introduced in Nouchis and the student idiolect. In the summer of 1987, while driving from the airport of Abidjan-Port-Bouët where a friend picked me up around 4:30 a.m., we saw a man jogging across the boulevard in the morning fog. To indicate that this was a dangerous thing to do, my friend said: "Ça c'est pas du jogging, c'est du *morting*!". The new word "morting" is an amalgamation of the French word "mort" (death), and of the "ing" of the English word "jogging".

In contrast with the lexicon, the syntax of both Nouchis and the student idiolect are not always deviant with reference to the norm. This is because

the speakers of these varieties generally have some level of formal education. In most cases, beyond (Standard) French, they also have some knowledge of other foreign languages such as English.

Some research suggest that these kinds of idiolects that are used essentially for a "phatic function" (Malinowski) are usually short lived. It is not clear if this will be the fate of these two varieties of Ivorian French. In response to the question "Peut-on détruire les patois?" (Can patois be eradicated?), L'Abbé Grégoire quotes one of his respondents as saying: "(Le patois) est une langue de frères et d'amis Pour le détruire, il faudrait détruire le soleil, la fraîcheur des nuits, . . . l'homme tout entier."⁸ Personally, I use the student idiolect whenever I write a letter to or get together with a member of my old circle of friends. I am not sure that I will ever stop using it.

Conclusion

This description of the nativization of French in Côte d'Ivoire shows that a main function of language is that of establishing and maintaining social relationships. Although (Standard) French remains an important social resource, Ivorian French is increasingly being called upon to play a greater role as a social dialect. To date, it has clearly established itself as a viable alternative for interethnic communication, and it is considerably reducing the domains of (Standard) French.

The development of Ivorian French should be welcomed as an enrichment of the French language. After all, it is the nativization of English in countries such as Tanzania, India, and Jamaica that has made it an international language spoken by approximately 400 million people who are not native speakers of English (Strevens 1982).

Notes

¹The word *Ivorian French* is a cover term for all "non-native varieties of French in Côte d'Ivoire.

²Cf. A. Salon, *L'Action culturelle de la France dans le Monde* Paris, Nathan, 1983.

³Manessy was quoted in Lafage (1982:19). Also Cf. Duponchel (1979:385-417) for other subdivisions of French in Côte d'Ivoire. "Moussa" is the main character of "La Chronique de Moussa" published in the weekly sports magazine *Ivoire Dimanche*. "Treichville" is a popular quarter of Abidjan (former capital of Côte d'Ivoire). The word "Petit" of "Petit français" is used to draw attention to the fact that this variety is not autonomous and is the result of the erroneous approximation of (Standard) French.

⁴In fact, the radios are often turned on "full blast" in order to achieve that goal.

⁵Cf. P. Djité. "The Spread of Dyula and Popular French in Côte d'Ivoire: Implications for Language Planning", forthcoming.

⁶"All their effort tends to mould this form on its content, that is to say to adapt the French language in order to suit concepts and feelings that are purely African In fact, French in Africa might already have become an African French." My own translation.

⁷The other lingua franca is Dyula.

⁸"(The patois) is a language of brothers and friends To eradicate it, one would have to destroy the sun, the coolness of the nights, . . . the entire human race." My own translation. Cf. J.-Y. Lartichaux, "Politique linguistique de la Révolution Française," in *Diogène*, 97, 1977:77-96.

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Market Encounters as Social Events in the Open Markets of Dakar, Senegal

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Introduction

Dakar, the capital of the Republic of Senegal, is situated on the westernmost point of the continent of Africa. The city has at all times a large number of tourists from Europe, the U.S., and other African countries. Senegalese from the various administrative regions go to Dakar in great numbers to visit, find work, or as market and/or street vendors. Open market and street vending is the livelihood of thousands of Senegalese. Other market vendors come from neighboring countries such as Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, or as far away as Niger.

Open markets are designated areas where people go to buy, sell, and barter goods and services of their choice. Such market places are mostly associated with bargaining: a process whereby two parties negotiate the price of goods or services between them. However, in this paper, I will propose and discuss that open markets are settings in which social events including bargaining occur, and that there is more to bargaining as a speech event than striking a deal. The open market community interact on two levels: socially, to discuss topics of interest; and on the business level, as customers and vendors, they bargain for goods and services.

Dakar has over ten open markets, some of which are relatively small neighborhood open markets and others which are in business districts and are for larger crowds. The main market, Sandaga, is located in the down town section of the city. The Sandaga spreads for acres. Hundreds of permanent stalls surround the main market building. In addition, vendors set up shop on the

sidewalks, the curb and in some areas, even on the streets. Other markets in the city include The Kermel, Cours des Maures (The Mauritanian Silver Market), The Tilene, Village Artisanal (The Artisan's crafts village), Salle des Ventes (Auction-Room), Daral Ba (Livestock market), Grand Dakar, HLM, Colobane, and Castor. All the markets offer a variety of goods and/services.

Dakar open market prices are not fixed. Prices of all goods and services are bargained for. Vendors try to sell their goods with a maximum profit and customers try to buy them at a minimal price. As a result, shopping in the open markets is interactive. The customer and the vendor are in constant contact, and interactions are not limited to price negotiations. Interactants carry on conversations, discuss politics and other issues of interest. At market, business is social and interactive. Bargainers often deviate from the content focused forms of hard bargaining to involvement focused forms of interaction: conversations, *tete-a-tetes*, and arguments. The ability to maintain the fragile yet critical balance between the two is what is expected of both buyer and seller.

A cross section of Senegalese society (people of all ethnic backgrounds, male and female, young and old, rich and poor) go to market daily as vendors, customers, laborers or simply to exchange news. Vendors often have seats at their stalls or vending areas for people to sit and argue, yak or tell stories. Family members that keep a stall often sit around and converse among themselves or with friends, next-stall-neighbors, or customers when there is no bargaining being performed. In the process of bargaining customers may switch to other topics as the need arises, or as a strategic move to reach a settlement. I witnessed a bargaining event between a vendor and a customer which had started in the middle of a conversation about the first Negro Arts Festival in Dakar, Senegal. The customer became an active participant in the conversation. After many exchanges that went on for almost an hour, the customer turned to the vendor and said "do ko wani" (will you reduce the price?). Bargainers often engage themselves in conversations or other speech events that will help them to get to know each other, thus increasing their chances of coming to terms. Some onlookers simply stand around and listen to other people bargain.

Bargaining: A Social Speech Event

Bargaining is a persuasive and dialogic form of discourse in which interactants, as co-participants who share the same language, cultural background and conventionalized open market bargaining repertoire, use speech and behavior in order to reach a settlement. Bargaining in the open market is, as Rubin and Brown (1975) put it, "the cardinal illustration of social interaction". In the open markets, there is more to being in business than making a sale or purchasing an item or services. This observation has been made in a number of works. Horace (1953), writing about the city of Timbuctoo, states that

“commerce of course was the activity that brought the heterogenous population of Timbuctoo together and functioned to maintain the communication for centuries” (p. 53). Frank (1961), states that in the city of Dakar, “business is not so much a means of earning a living as it is a form of social intercourse. It perpetually leads to fascinating contacts and conversations and is the best antidote against loneliness and seclusion, which is probably what the African dislikes most. If you do sell something, it is of course even more wonderful. But if you don’t and people just stop and bargain for hours, at any rate you have not lost your day” (p. 8). Ong (1982), states that “in primary oral cultures, even business is not business: it is fundamentally rhetoric. Purchasing something at a Middle East souk or bazaar is not a simple economic transaction, as it would be at Woolworth’s and as a high-technology culture is likely to presume it would be in the nature of things. Rather, it is a series of verbal (and somatic) maneuvers, a polite duel, a contest of wits, an operation in oral agonistic” (p. 69). As indicated above, open market bargaining does not only function as a tool for negotiating prices, but fosters social intercourse.

Bargainers fulfill personal needs: to make a profit, or purchase an item or services; and social requirements: to greet, negotiate in a sociable manner, take leave, give lagniappe, and the like. In a study of 86 bargaining encounters in the open markets of Dakar, Senegal, (Sosseh, 1987) I found that interactants may perform one or more of six functional units: Summons, Greeting, Inquiry, Price Setting, Service, and Leave-Taking. The performance of Price Setting with any of the other units provides the bargainer with the opportunity to interact in a sociable manner. Some of these functional units are used more often than others as indicated below.

The functional units and their frequency of occurrence in 86 recorded encounters

Summons	Greeting	Inquiry	Price Setting	Service	Leave-Taking
23 (26.74%)	79 (91.86%)	39 (45.34%)	86 (100%)	47 (54.65%)	18 (21.93%)

The chart above indicates that Summons is performed in 23 of the 86 encounters; Greetings in 79 of the encounters; Inquiry in 39 of the encounters; Price Setting in all 86 encounters; Service in 47 of the encounters; and Leave-Taking in 18 of the encounters. Indicated below each number is the corresponding percentage of frequency that unit is performed in the 86 bargaining events.

These units are constituent parts of open market discourse and all of them may occur in a bargaining encounter. As many different speech events take place at market, some of these individual units occur in events other than bargaining.

The following matrix shows the open market bargaining functional units, speaker turns as initiator or respondent, structural segments, and whether or not a functional unit is recurrent.

Functional Units	Structure	Structural segments (Language functions)		Recurrence
Summons	I(B,S) R(B,S)	Phatic		R
Greeting	I(B,S) R(S,B)	Salutation Response	Request prayer Response ratification	R
Inquiry	I(B,S) R(S,B)	Request Response		R
Price setting	I(B,S) R(S,B)	Request negative resp./counter offer Response affirmation/another offer +		R
Service	I(B,S) R(S,B)	Transit Receipt +		R
Leave-taking	I(B,S) R(S,B)	Bid farewell Acknowledge	Response Request +	-

The first column of the bargaining matrix above shows the Functional Units of the speech event: Summons, Greeting, Inquiry, Price Setting, Service, and Leave-Taking. The second column indicates possible Speaker Turns as initiator (I) and respondent (R), with either buyer (B) or seller (S) taking these roles. The function column indicates adjacency pairs and their attendant language functions. The plus sign (+) means that other structural segments may be used in the performance of that unit. The minus (-) means that the corresponding unit is not recurrent. A bargainer performs one or more unit in the course of a bargaining encounter. An encounter includes the social interaction, "the factor that leads bargainers to understand one another's expectations, to submit to each other's influences and to collaborate on joint settlements" (Putnam and Jones, 1982 p 264).

An open market, as shown above, functions as a social milieu where people interact on issues not limited to business. Greenwood (1974) puts it best when he concludes that "successful bargaining is most likely in a cooperative social climate permitting unrestricted communication". While bargaining, interactants may perform other speech events or shift to an entirely different topic with all as part of the "global" event of bargaining.

Senegalese society is communal. Many aspects of the culture are performed marked by collective adherence to Senegalese custom. Bargaining is no exception. Bargainers greet, converse, and can be sociable just as if participating in traditional social settings. Shopping in the open markets fosters human relations.

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Classifiers in Wolof

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Wolof is the language spoken primarily in Senegal and Gambia. It has two major dialects: the Senegalese dialect, often referred to as Dakar Wolof (Stewart, 1966), and the Gambian Wolof. Most of the attention has been given to Dakar Wolof. Gambian Wolof has been left practically undisturbed by both the native and the nonnative linguists. The reasons for this oversight are many. It may be due to the fact that the cosmopolitan capital city of Senegal, Dakar, makes it a natural place with which to begin; Senegal happens to be a larger country than Gambia, and with the greater number of Wolof speakers; and the fact that there are many more studies of Wolof done in French by the French linguistics reflects the linguistic status of French in the country as the second language of choice among the speakers. In Gambia, however, the second language of choice is English. The French linguists have been active in the analysis of Wolof for a long time, while the English linguists have not. Dakar Wolof became the preferred field of study. Many other considerations may be mentioned that led to this imbalance, but this is not the proper forum for such a discussion.

The present paper is concerned with Gambian Wolof. I began collecting data on Wolof of Gambia over ten years ago from Mr. Hayib Sosseh, a native

speaker of Wolof, and a doctoral candidate at the School of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University. This paper will concentrate on the noun classifiers in Gambian Wolof. It will account for their number, and some of the lexical contexts of their occurrences as much as can be determined at this time. What is intriguing about Wolof and the other Bantu languages is the fact that many of the classifiers occur with nouns with homophonic initial consonants. There is, for example, a preponderance of /si/ and /mi/ classifiers with words that begin with /s. . . ./ and /m. . . ./ respectively. They do not, however, neither consistently nor exclusively occur in this fashion. Moreover, not all the words that begin with /s. . . ./ or /m. . . ./ command /si/ or /mi/ classifiers, nor are /si/ and /mi/ classifiers restricted to words that begin with /s. . . ./ and /m. . . ./ . This general pattern is observed with the rest of the classifiers with various degrees of variation as the following lists will indicate. All the examples given below are taken from the dictionary of WOLOF-ENGLISH and ENGLISH-WOLOF based primarily on the speech of Mr. Sosseh. This dictionary will eventually be published (Sara, to appear).

There are some indications that the initial consonants have or may have had some determining influence on the selection of the classifiers. The following examples, however, will indicate that the selection of the classifier is a far more subtle and complex process than matching the choice of the classifier with the initial consonant of the noun.

Gambian Wolof has the following nine singular noun classifiers:

/f-	s-	k-/
/b-	l-	g-/
/m-	j-	w-/

which follow the noun in discourse. They will be discussed and exemplified below.

Wolof has also two plural markers: /ñ-, y-/.

The classifiers occur with the vowels: /-i, -a, -u/. The significance of the choice of the vowel will not be dwelt on here, but in brief, these vocalic specifiers indicate the degree of the proximity of the referent to the speaker. e.g.

/fas wi/	'horse, close to the speaker'
/fas wa/	'horse, far from the speaker'
/fas wu/	'horse, referred to in its absence'

THE CLASSIFIER /fi/:

/fEnEn fi/	'other place'
/fEna fi/	'individual place'

/fi/ occurs with a limited number of lexical items. It may or may not be relevant to include /fi/ among the classifiers that are much more productive. Any general statement with reference to /fi/ would be otiose in this context. It is included here for completeness sake and for the sake of consistency of the pattern.

THE CLASSIFIER /b-/:

/bOrOm bi/	'owner'	/daan bi/	'raid'
/forfor bi/	'kidney'	/jOlOf bi/	'Wolof'
/kOl bi/	'glue'	/ligey bi/	'work'
/maaNgo bi/	'mango'	/nax bi/	'trick'
/Os bi/	'hook'	/pimpi bi/	'soot'
/rEEn bi/	'root'	/saga bi/	'tiger'
/toy bi/	'fool'	/wEEr bi/	'moon'
/xiif bi/	'hunger'	/yax bi/	'bone'

As it can be seen from the above list, /bi/ occurs with words that begin with /b. . ./, and consonants other than /bi/. It should be pointed out that /bi/ is often the alternate choice with the other classifiers, i.e. when a noun permits more than one classifier.

THE CLASSIFIER /mi/:

/borombutigimbaga mi/	'hawker'	/caax mi/	'thread'
/domimuus mi/	'kitten'	/feey mi/	'swim'
/joy mi/	'brawl'	/kaf mi/	'jest'
/mbaga mi/	'wing'	/ñax mi/	'grass'
/ndenda mi/	'large drum'	/pica mi/	'bird'
/reew mi/	'nation'	/sow mi/	'sour milk'
/taga mi/	'nest'	/xEI mi/	'intellect'

/mi/ is among the frequently used classifiers. It is as frequent and free in its occurrence as the /bi/, /wi/ and the /gi/ classifiers as the above examples show.

THE CLASSIFIER /si/:

/cuuj si/	'chick'	/caaku si/	'sacule'
/dEñaaK si/	'early morning'	/fudan si/	'henna'
/jaaNgOrOsixat si/	'tuberculosis'	/mOOl si/	'pony'
/ñalla si/	'footpath'	/ndaw si/	'lady'
/NgOOñ si/	'evening'	/pax si/	'hole'
/safara si/	'fire'	/xurfaan si/	'cold'
/xalOg si/	'puppy'	/yax si/	'ossicle'

The classifier /si/ occurs most frequently with nouns that begin with /s. . ./, even though it co-occurs with other consonants, as the above examples indicate.

THE CLASSIFIER /li-/:

/cat li/	'tip'	/ñjig li/	'price'
/ndiga li/	'waist'	/tistin li/	'heel'
/xojox li/	'climber squirrel'	/yuxa li/	'yoke'

/li/ occurs most frequently with nouns beginning with /n-, ñ-, t-, c-/, and in rare cases, with /x-/.

THE CLASSIFIER /ji-/:

/baay ji/	'dad'	/caaf ji/	'roasted peanuts'
/dOIE ji/	'power'	/gErtEbaxal ji/	'boiled peanuts'
/jiko ji/	'behavior'	/kumpa ji/	'secret'
/legi ji/	'instant'	/mag ji/	'older sister'
/ñjabOOt ji/	'family'	/naNgam ji/	'sum'
/papa ji/	'papa'	/rEE ji/	'laugh'
/tata ji/	'castle'	/wax ji/	'speech'
yOmba ji/	'pumpkin'		

The overall occurrence of /ji/ is not very frequent, nor does it occur with nouns that begin with fricatives.

THE CLASSIFIER /k-/:

/kEna ki/	'somebody'	/kiñu?ay ki/	'guilty person'
/kujaanga ki/	'educated person'	/nit ki/	'person'

Even though /ki/ is more frequent than /fi/, it has a very restricted occurrence. It occurs with nouns that begin with /k . . ./, or nouns that refer to "person".

THE CLASSIFIER /gi/:

/bObO gi/	'hive'	/cafka gi/	'flavor'
/dEk gi/	'fever'	/gaal gi/	'rowboat'
/jil gi/	'drum'	/kemij gi/	'ledge'
/lEka gi/	'food'	/muj gi/	'result'
/ñEmEñ gi/	'valor'	/naanu gi/	'pipe'
/pEEl gi/	'shovel'	/rOn gi/	'bottom'
/sixa gi/	'rooster'	/tEfEs gi/	'shore'
/wEt gi/	'side'	/xEñ gi/	'smell'
/yuur gi/	'brain'		

The occurrence of /gi/ rivals that of /bi/, /mi/ and /wi/ in its freedom of occurrence with the other consonants. It occurs with a variety of consonants and with vowels.

THE CLASSIFIER /wi/:

/bOriyOO n wi/	'wayside'	/bOrOmaay wi/	'criminal'
/caaxaan wi/	'joke'	/day wi/	'dung'
/far wi/	'fiance, m'	/gub wi/	'wheat ear'
/jin wi/	'fish'	/kapa wi/	'buttock'
/leeb wi/	'story'	/melin wi/	'fashion'
/ñam wi/	'food'	/naat wi/	'turkey'
/pelit wi/	'slice'	/rab wi/	'animal'
/sax wi/	'worm'	/teeñ wi/	'louse'
/wEEr wi/	'month'	/xEER wi/	'gravel'
/yika wi/	'ox'		

/wi/ is among the four most frequently used classifiers, i.e. /bi, mi, gi, wi/. With the illustrations for /wi/ the list of classifiers is completed.

The above examples illustrate the occurrence of all the classifiers in a summary fashion. They are arranged in a manner that indicates if a specific classifier co-occurs with words that begin with certain consonants. /bi/ is the most frequently used classifier and has the least number of restrictions on its occurrences. /fi/ is the least frequently used, and has the most restrictions. /fi/ occurs only with words that begin with /f . ./ and with only very few words. /gi/ is frequent with no restrictions except that it does not occur before words that begin with /f . ./ /ji/ is not frequent, nor does it occur with words that begin with a fricative. /ki/ is more frequent than /fi/ but restricted to words beginning with /k . ./ or to words that refer to 'person'. /li/ occurs primarily with words that begin with /n-/, /ñ-/, /c-/, stop /t-/ and fricative /x-/, with very rare exception with other sounds. /mi/ is a frequently occurring classifier with very few restrictions, e.g. it does not occur with nouns that begin with /p-/. /si/ occurs most frequently with words beginning with /s-/. /wi/ is a free occurring classifier that does not have restrictions.

There are also semantic and derivational restrictions on the selection of the classifiers. By way of exemplification, when a noun refers to a tree or the fruit of the same tree, there is a consistent occurrence of two different classifiers. e.g.

/gi/		bi/	
/garab gi/	'tree'	/garab bi/	'fruit'
/pOm gi/	'apple tree'	/pOm bi/	'apple'
/banaana gi/	'banaana tree'	/banaana bi/	'banana'
/sanaana gi/	'pineapple tree'	/sanaana bi/	'pineapple'

The diminutive nouns generally take the classifier /si/, e.g.

/Ci/		/si/	
/Ngalaw li/	'wind'	/Ngalaw si/	'breeze'
/yax bi/	'bone'	/yax si/	'ossicle'
/pax mi/	'hole'	/pax si/	'pore'
/xaj bi/	'dog'	/xaj si/	'puppy'
/ganaar gi/	'chicken'	/cuuj si/	'chick'

In addition to semantic criteria for selecting the proper noun classifier, there are derivational considerations that need to be mentioned in this context. By way of exemplification, the derivational suffixes: /-kay, -aay, -kat/ take the classifier /bi/. This is exemplified below:

NOMINAL DERIVATIVES:

/saNgukay bi/	'bathroom'
/karantikay bi/	'blockade'
/xamEkay bi/	'brand'
/citaxawaay bi/	'abruptness'
/mbootaay bi/	'association'
/dEkuwaay bi/	'habitation'

/waxalkat bi/	‘advisor’
/ñaaNkat bi/	‘appellant’
/atkat bi/	‘arbitrator’

The lexical data point to a hierarchy of choice in the selection of the classifiers. As a rule, semantico-morphological criteria seem to prevail over the phonological.

We must mention two antithetical tendencies in Wolof in the use of the classifiers. On the one hand there is a free alternation among several classifiers for the same lexical item without any semantic difference, e.g.

/keyit wi/	‘paper’
/keyit gi/	‘paper’
/keyit bi/	‘paper’

This is coupled with the opposite tendency to differentiate the same lexeme by the sole use of the classifiers, e.g.

/garab bi/	‘fruit’
/garab gi/	‘tree’
/garab wi/	‘medicine’
/yax bi/	‘bone’
/yax si/	‘ossicle’
/yax bi/	‘dog’
/xaj si/	‘puppy’

THE PLURAL MARKERS:

The plural is marked by the use of a classifier, and there are two forms: /yi/ and /ñi/.

THE PLURAL MARKER /yi/:

/garab yi/	‘trees’
/fas yi/	‘horses’
/paaka yi/	‘knives’

THE PLURAL MARKER /ñi/:

This plural marker occurs with a very restricted class of nouns. Formally with singular nouns that have a /k-/ classifier, or with a restricted class of humans referring to person. e.g.

/kena ñi/	‘people, someones’
/nit ñi/	‘person’

To further determine the phonological conditioning of the classifiers by the initial consonants, a list of all the words beginning with a vowel was drawn up and the co-occurring classifiers tabulated. All the classifiers occur with words beginning with one of the vowels with the exception of /fi, ki, li/ classifier. e.g.

/bi/	/apa bi/	‘limit’	/uus bi/	‘neglect’
/gi/	/waajur gi/	‘household’	/umu gi/	‘misfortune’

/ji/	/alEl ji/	'goods'	/aaxa ji/	'fault'
/li/	/waccu li/	'puke'	/yuxa li/	'yoke'
/mi/	/warEEf mi/	'cause'	/at mi/	'age'
/si/	/opa si/	'illness'	/ilig si/	'morning'
/wi/	/Et wi/	'stick'	/aat wi/	'quarrel'

If the classifiers are not phonologically predictable, then the other options are morphosyntactic and semantic. There is some justification for the claim that there are semantic categories that are marked with specific classifiers, e.g. the tree category. Trees have the classifier /gi/, while the fruit of the tree is indicated by the same morphemic sequence with a different classifier, i.e. /bi/. With the fruit of the tree the classifiers may be refined a bit. The usual classifier is /bi/ if one is talking about a single type fruit. When the fruit comes in bunches one may find /ji/ classifier/ or /li/; other exemplification can be given to illustrate that the semantic classification will have to be a refined one in terms of subclasses within categories. This is merely a sketch based on the lexicon with no account taken of the great majority of morphological or syntactic considerations that will need to be considered in a complete account of the classifiers.

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The Interface Between Writing and Speech in West Africa

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1. Introduction.

In *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (1987) Jack Goody states that:

Since I am dealing mainly with the results of linguistic and psycholinguistic research, I shall concentrate on the two main issues that have been of immediate concern to contributors to these fields, namely (1) differences between the written and oral registers of the same language, and (2) differences between the performance of individuals in the written and in the oral registers.

Neither of these issues is directly related to the one that concerns us most closely, namely, the differences between those languages that have been written and those that have not. It is one we will return to later but it should be said that little attention has been paid to this linguistically since the nineteenth century, although at the semantic and pragmatic levels the problem has been raised by anthropologists. . . pp. 262–3.

This paper is an attempt to partially remedy this state of affairs. Goody declares that little research has been conducted by linguists. Yet he based his own work on these grounds. The bibliographies of his two latest books do not include linguistic descriptions of languages but instead references to general theories of linguistics. Curiously, Goody does not refer to the series of articles by David Dalby on West African systems of writing (1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1986), to Scribner and Cole's unique and extensive study of the Vai (1981) or to Koteï (1972 and 1981) and he chooses to ignore the research conducted since World War II in applied linguistics. Goody's generation of researchers, as typified in I. J. Gelb (1952), belongs to an *episteme* dominated by a logocentric perception of the world, rooted in one type of writing and

in the mythic perfection of the latin alphabet and its numerous adaptations. (Anon.:1986)

We will attempt to show that the imposition of the Latin alphabet on until then "unwritten" West African Languages (Migeod: 1913; Dalby: ;1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1986; Battestini: 1988), while solving economically a fair amount of problems such as rapid Christianization, actually generated important transformations of the local languages at all levels of the linguistic analysis (Zima: 1974; Diri-Kidiri: 1983).

By examining a few of the systems of writing and other systems of communication native to or long implanted in West Africa, we will show that most of these systems were either logographic or syllabic (See Griaule & Dieterlen: 1951; Calame-Griaule & Lacroix: 1969; Calvet: 1984). Their relatively recent modifications into alphabetic notation occurred under the combined influences of the Latin alphabet and of a type of Arabic script.

Our intention here is also to expose certain stereotypes with regard to writing in Africa, and to show the relationships between the written and the oral in West Africa and their implications.

2. On Writing.

Africa, nature and culture, did not provide much of the experience from which our sciences emerged. It is well known that Africa was a terra incognita to Marx and, until Malinovsky, to most social scientists. If we admit that all our sciences, institutions, frames of reference and many of the so-called universal patterns of thinking, behaving and feeling slowly emerged from chaos and then from confrontations with other cultures, we must remember that for most of us, Africa, until recently, was thought to have little if anything to contribute to humanity (The first history of Africa course was offered in the States in 1965 and the first African Linguistics course offered in French-Speaking Africa in 1966). Less than a generation ago slavery was still accepted in many parts of the world and the prejudices towards the black people are still with us today. They shade not only our interpretations of African data but even our methodologies based on erroneous perceptions, lack of information, indigence of our tools of description and interpretation, definitions and classifications. The Africanist discourse is still ideologically a colonialist one. According to Derrida "writing" is at the core of our *episteme* and delineates our frames of reference, our categories said to be "logocentric" (Battestini: 1988)

Let us take an example. It is common to many social scientists, including linguists, to believe that the more literate a society is the more complex its language and therefore its institutions and means of reflexion are. All of Goody's work tends to make this point. Lévi-Strauss, many years back, concluded a series of lectures at the Collège de France on "primitive cultures" with these words: "And then there was the Greek miracle". It is appropriate that one distinctive criteria between the written and the oral of a given language is the greatest complexity of the sentence and "consequently" of the articu-

lation of the system of thought. In a literate society a sentence may express more than one or two ideas. Clauses are logically and syntactically linked by grammatical words unknown to cultures dominated by oral tradition. I belonged to a European society in which my parents' generation proceeded from an "oral culture" to a "written" or literate one, and in a foreign language. I have spent thirty two years in Africa, mainly West Africa. Based on my repeated observations, I may state that any recourse to a hierarchy of values which could lead us to conclude that oral cultures produce simpler sentences than cultures where the written medium is largely in use is a grave error loaded with prejudice. West African story-tellers use complex sentences. But since the type of communication used is verbal and within a manipula they resort to supra- and infra-linguistic features, gestures, mimicry and connotations.

Semiotically, certain of these paralinguistic elements may be equated to these morpho-syntactic linking elements. Rather, it is our mode of recording (still the blind tape-recorder) and our linguistic definition of what language is to us, the literate peoples, which are taking away the complexity of the sentence, which are preventing us from seeing that our data has been reduced to what it is not. So we establish that these removed features are absent and demonstrate the simplicity of the data. The presence of "unsuitable" verbal features (such as tones, vowel harmony, clicks, labio-velars) for the written medium do not permit to infer an intrinsic primitiveness or poverty of the simplified data. The written medium is different from the oral medium not superior. Relative clauses exist in both if expressed differently. It may be unscientific to apply a method or a frame of reference to data totally foreign to the cultures from which these methods and frameworks originated.

All of Gelb's "historical" categories are simultaneously present in West Africa today, mocking his chronological organisation. Some systems of writing such as the Mum of King Njoya evolved from ideographic to alphabetic in a few decades, yet managed to retain, at each state of the transformation, some of the features of the preceding stages. Therefore our concept of diachrony, which relativizes events in terms of time, and is often combined with a sense of continuum from origin, simple, primitive, to achievement, complex, modern, is inapplicable to many parts of West Africa. As one of my Senegalese students stressed in the 1960's: "According to the system of classification of your history book, my mother is definitely a prehistoric woman, my father a medieval character and I believe that I would be a 20th century citizen of my newly created country. It's a wonder that we may communicate and live together". Africa is so pluralistic and diversified that it challenges our minds. African systems of writing are numerous and yet they have been ignored or repressed (See Fédry: 1977 and compare to Dalby's works).

3. West African Systems of Writing.

3.1 Arabic.

The Arabic script has been in use in West Africa since the end of the first millenium, maybe earlier. For many centuries a few clerks, malams, qadis,

traders . . . were able to read and write in this script. To the masses, Arabic writing was seen as a concrete and yet strange manifestation of control of surrounding forces, cultural as well as natural. The people used (and many still do) this script for geomancy, divination, astrology and amulet-making. Some literates had names known all over the Islamic world (Battestini: 1986). I described elsewhere the impact of this medium on literary forms, showing that initially the content was indigenized. The addition of many exotic terms into the medium led to the conviction that the script had to be adapted to the local pronunciation of Arabic and finally a radically modified script was used to reduce African languages to writing. This 'Ajami, or non-Arab script, resembles the Arabic script but with—not mentioning additions and subtractions—a precise vocalisation absent from the original. We see that over the centuries islamized Africans could not accept a system of writing which would be almost uniquely consonantal. The notation of the syllable seems to have appeared indispensable. We will come back to this point.

3.2 *Tifinagh.*

Another system of writing is the tifinagh of the Tamashek language of the Touareg. These people were crossing the Sahara for the Romans and the Phoenicians in Antiquity. Their language is Berber. All written letters are read and each letter is a consonant pronounced with a centralized vowel. Watching a young Targui attempting to read a word is astonishing. It goes like this for + [| : . + iéTé..é, éMmé.éé, eNné.. é., iéR...ésSé..é.é. étT then while singing his process of discovery he/she uncovers the meaning of the melody and may pronounce it correctly: Tamanrasset or phonemically /temenreset/ (Blaguernon: 1955). Here we must pay attention to the fact that the reading is syllabified and sung. In the West it is commonly accepted that certain schoolchildren learned the “song” of their multiplication tables and the alphabet to memorize them. Poetic meters were initially mnemonic devices. There was a written literature in this script clearly deriving like our alphabet from the Phoenician. Actually the terms /tefener/, /fenisian/ and /fonetic/ have a common base which is /F-N/ of /fon-/ for sound.

3.3 *Nsibidi.*

Created around 1700 in the Cross River Basin of what is today the South East of Nigeria, the Nsibidi script is logographic or ideographic and is mentioned here uniquely because it may be read in at least 5 distinct languages: Efik, Ekoï, Efut, Igbo (Some igbophones of Aro-Chukwu) and Annang. I have not found any trace of literature in this script but there are archives, court cases and Ekpe recordings (Battestini: forthcoming). This system is used by a secret society and is known only to its members (Dugast & Jeffreys: 1950). Signs are shown in public as a manifestation of the power of the Ekpe society. The non-initiates recognize them as being Nsibidi signs but cannot read them. This secrecy of knowledge considered as a source of power is quite common to many West African societies. Exclusively used by a ruling minority, it is respected and/or feared by the majority (Campbell: 1983).

3.4 Vai.

The Vai script, mainly from Liberia, as it is known and used today derives from a set of ancient symbols (Massaquoi: 1911). It is mainly a syllabari. Most of the signs stand for a syllable of the CV type but seven signs are for vowels to which can be added a diacritic for nasal, including labiovelar stops such as kpV, nkpV, kpnV, gbV, labionasals such as mbV, palatonasal as njV and others of the types dhV, thV, lbV, hnV, shV, zhV. Punctuation exists. All together there are approximately 273 signs, some of which have allographs.

Signs denoting similar sounds—sharing one or more phonological feature(s)—show graphic similarity. This suggests an accurate phonological analysis of the medium. Arabic, Latin and even Cherokee influences have been invoked but no one went further than suggesting the borrowing of some principles which is common to all systems of writing. The system looks like an inventory of all the possible syllables of the Vai language. A fair amount of local literature has been written in this system as well as the Bible, the Iliad and the Qur'an. The Vai script is widely used today for posters, correspondence, contracts, shop notices, in schools, road signs.

It was believed that Vai could become the written medium of a lingua franca for West and Central Africa but it has never been used outside Sierra Leone, the North of Liberia and some neighbouring parts of these two countries. Massaquoi wrote in 1911:

It might appear to some that, since on the advent of the English language all native languages must vanish, the sooner Vai and others disappear the better. But it should be borne in mind that it is one thing for a man to die a natural death and another for him to be strangled or starved. To neglect these languages on the ground that some day they must die is to starve them to death, and thereby commit a philological crime. I wonder what would have been the state of things if great poets, scientists, philosophers and other geniuses were all neglected and suffered to die in the cradle on the grounds that *man must die*. p. 466.

Migeod noticed that “It will take only a fraction of the time that it takes to learn to read with an alphabet . . .”, conclusion with which we agree for linguistic reasons. The Vai script does not seem to take into consideration the tonal characteristic of the Vai language but illustrates clearly the marked preference of West Africans for the syllabari. Some other scripts of this sub-region of West Africa such as the Mende, the Loma, the Kpelle, the Bete, the Bassa and the Gola may have been influenced by the Vai script, as they share some or many of its features. However, each is modified to a point of non-recognition and truly adapted to the reduction to writing of its own language. Adoption in Africa is never blind; it is rather an adaptation.

3.5 Mum.

This script, created by the King Njoya, had 466 signs. This logographic system evolved rapidly. In 25 years it reproduced the complete history of

writing. The third version (1902) was largely a syllabari. Schools were training adults as well as children. Njoya wrote a book of pharmacopeia and one on the history of his people in the third version of the script. In 1918 schools were closed and destroyed, books burned. Njoya was arrested and exiled to the new capital of the colony. He died two years later. He was condemned by the powerful colonial tenants of the Latin alphabet.

5. Diversity.

It is true that linguists have created numerous languages in West Africa. Long before the notions of mutuality and degree of intelligibility were conceived, dialects of the same language were considered as different languages. It may be said that there are as many languages in Africa as dissertations about them in the West. A written language, and a literary one for that matter, the Pular or Fulani, is in use in a territory as wide as Europe. The diversity of West African languages is a myth. The diversity of the imposed systems of writing invented by the West, on the contrary, is just another source of chaos. We may mention the Romanist adapted system, the many adapted versions of the IPA, the World Orthograph formerly the African Alphabet . . . none exhibiting the slightest interest for the local scripts (See Lepsius: 1883/1981; Taylor: 1928; International Institute of African Languages and Cultures: 1930; Burssens: 1972; UNESCO: mainly 1966, 1976 and 1981; Oyelaran & Yai: 1976; Gregersen: 1977 and personal communication). A rapidly emerging consensus for homogeneity is to be noticed at UNESCO's level as well as by regions and language clusters (Bot-Ba-Njok: 1974). African linguists, willing to preserve their languages in their authenticity, multiply graphic signs to denote minute phonological features and produce unrealistic and uneconomical scripts. Let us imagine a vowel being open, slightly centralized and nasalized, long, affected with a raising-falling tone, potentially harmonized and included in a climb of some sort, the linguist will have to make a selection among the features (Jegede: 1986, personal communication). The chosen sign to represent this amalgam of sounds will nevertheless be much too complex. The relative unity of the phonological systems of West Africa authorizes the homogenization of the orthographies (Bamgbose: 1983) now in use and those to be created.

6. Evolution of Their Interface.

We have seen that local systems evolved from earlier forms and were made to suit the actual needs of the majority of the population of Africa except for the 5 to 20% of the westernized élite in power.

Let us consider a proto-writing system, the mythograms of the Yoruba or *Aroko* (Bloxam: 1887). Jensen explains: "A group of six cowrie shells has the primary meaning "six", *efa*. Since, however, *efa* means "attracted" (from *fa* "to draw"), a cord with 6 cowrie shells sent by a young man to a girl means:

"I feel myself drawn to you. Eight cowrie shells means "8", *ejo*. The same word, however, also means "agreeing" (from *jo* "to agree", "to be alike"); hence the sending of eight cowrie shells on the part of the girl to the lover means: I feel as you do, I agree." (1970:31). In this case, there is a rebus not a written language. Nevertheless, a lexical unit is represented in a referential object, reduced to a "string" of sounds, now free to symbolize anything else having approximately the same pronunciation as the one of the lexical units. Taking an object with the acoustic image of its name of which only the "graphic" signifier is kept and then using it to denote a new signified is but a manner of writing. It is not a common understanding of what should be writing but it is logically the same process. Not many Westerners are aware of that the letter "A" did stand for a cow and the letter "F" for a snail. In fact, we are used to it, we ignore it or we do not see any primitiveness in these historical relics. Would it be the same if by a strange modification of history Africans were trying to impose these animal symbols on us? It was André Breton who said that the word "knife" never murdered anyone and another surrealist, Magritte, who painted a pipe and wrote under it "this is not a pipe".

Let us examine two results of the impact of the Latin alphabet on African languages. A town of Senegal bears the name of /Xombol/ spelled by the French as Khombole. Westernized Senegalese speaking French would say or read /kombol/ but in Wolof they would say /Xombol/ (See Alexandre: 1983). Syntactically the acquisition of new forms from written languages leads to interesting results. A double deductive hypothesis such as "If I went to the meeting, I would have met Jack" was not unthinkable in Africa before the arrival of the Europeans but was never uttered. I tested this on my students in Linguistics at Calabar and later with some African friends. They all agree that such a thought sounds bizarre but it could be expressed in most African Languages. The difference is that the speaker would be immediately identified as a Westernized person or as very weird. None of the criteria invoked to distinguish oral and written forms is acceptable for the Fulani language. We have systematically compared the text of the *Ma'dinus-Sa'aadati* to phonological transcriptions of other texts such as those we studied elsewhere (Battestini: 1986). The list of distinctive features is long: preferential usage of elaborate syntactic and semantic structures, especially nominal constructions (noun groups, noun phrases, nominalizations, relative clauses) and complex verb structures, preference for subordinate rather than coordinate constructions, preferential usage of passive rather than active verb voice, preferential usage of subject-predicate constructions, instead of reference-proposition, preferential usage of declaratives and subjunctives rather than imperatives, interrogatives, and exclamations, preferential usage of definite articles rather than demonstrative, modifier and deictic terms, higher frequency of gerunds, participles, attributive adjectives, modal and perfective auxiliaries . . . Need to make all assumptions explicit, reliance on a more deliberate method of organizing ideas, using such expository concepts as thesis, topic sentence, supporting evidence, preferential elimination of false starts, repetitions,

digressions, and other redundancies which characterize informal spontaneous speech. It must be said that the text, written in 'Ajami, was created to be read aloud and/or recited. The written and oral forms of this African language do not differ significantly. From Gilgamesh, the Ilyad and the Odyssey to Flaubert, narratives were to be read aloud. This is the type of book found today in local libraries of traditional scholars in West Africa. And it has to be so in societies where a large proportion of the population does not read and venerates the uttered text read and discussed by a respected scholar.

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Tones of Yoruba Language*

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The Yoruba language is spoken mainly in Southwestern Nigeria and parts of the Dahomey (now Benin Republic), on the West Coast of Africa. It is spoken by approximately 35 million people and has various dialects, some of which are mutually intelligible and some of which are not. However, the speakers of the variant dialects of Yoruba communicate with each other in either the Oyo dialect or the Lagos dialect. The Oyo dialect is considered the more proper, albeit slightly more archaic dialect and is the dialect used in the media-audio, video as well as print. Yoruba belongs to the Kwa language family and has been described as a tonal language. This paper will discuss the tones of the Yoruba language and the different functions that these tones have. But first, what is a tonal language?

Pike 1945: 1 defines a tonal language as:

“one having significant contrastive pitch on each syllable” Thus, the high or low tones of a tonal language contrast with each other just as the b, d, g in big, dig, and gig do. Ward 1956: 29 also defines a tone language as

- a. “one which makes use of the pitch of the voice as an essential element in the formation of words and in connected speech. Tone shows itself in the following ways: As part of the ‘make-up’ of a word: e.g. the word for dog is aja [-], and the tones (mid-level followed by high-level) are as much part of the word as the vowels and consonant.
- b. Following on (a), as a distinguishing factor in meaning:
ɛwa [__] with two low tones, means bean;
ɛwa [-] the same vowels and consonant sounds, with a mid-level followed by a low-level tone, means beauty;
ɛwa [--] with mid-level tones is meaningless.

The difference between the first two words is as important as a difference in vowel and consonant would be”

To say that a language that lacks the aforementioned tonal contrast is non-tonal would be erroneous. Every language has some sort of tonal characteristics that are unique to it. I will describe three different types of tones.

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Rhythmic Tones:

These may also be called intonation or contour. This is the undulation of the human voice when it is engaged in speech. This type of tone, or rather intonation, is easily detected when a speaker of a language A, for instance, Chinese or Swedish, speaks a language B, for instance English, with the accent and intonational contours of language A. Intonation may also display the emotions of the speaker, as in

ègbón è l'ó yān jẹ	his ^{bro} ther cheated him
ègbón è l'ó yān jẹ	his bro th er cheated him?
ègbón è / l'ó yān jẹ.	his brO th er cheated him!

(Examples are modifications and translations of English sentences from Bolinger 1972.)

The first example is a statement of fact or report of a fact. The second example is a question of a fact or report of a fact. The third example, however, portrays the speaker's disbelief that the concerned person's own flesh and blood could do such a thing.

As I said earlier, all languages have this intonation feature.

Syntactic Tones:

These are the tones that differentiate between the variant syntactic meanings of a sentence or types of sentences, for example, the difference between a declarative and an interrogative.

Ó ti lọ	he/she/it has gone
Ó ti lọ	has he/she/it gone?

However, in the interrogative, the tones are at a slightly higher pitch than in the declarative and this results from the dropping off of the interrogative particle 'se' or 'nje'.

Şé ó ti lọ?	has he/she/it gone?
Şé -----> Ø	

The difference between the declarative and interrogative of utterances such as in the above example may also be signaled by a raising of the eyebrows and may depend on who says it first, like if a person A was asking person B about the whereabouts of a person C and asks 'Ó ti lọ?', then it is a question, but if person B answers with the same utterance or walks into a room to announce the departure of person C, then it is a declarative. Alternatively, if person B walks into the room and says the utterance, it may be a question. It all depends on the height of the tones in the question. The tone that

differentiates between the statement and the question is the same but the tone of the question is higher than that of the statement because of the dropping of the interrogative particle 'se'. The tone of the interrogative particle is transferred to the first word in the question and this intensifies the tone and signals that dropping of the interrogative particle has taken place and that the sentence is a question.

Semantic Tones:

The third type of intonation involves semantic tones. Semantic tones are tones that establish a different semantic reality for words that are spelt and pronounced the same way, but which have different tones on them. These semantic tones are Pike's 'significant contrastive pitches'. The Yoruba language has four tone levels or tonemes.

falling	\	do
mid or level	-	re
rising	/	mi
falling/rising	~	

Semantic tones are superimposed on rhythmic tones. All languages have rhythmic tones, but not all languages have semantic tones. None of the four tones in Yoruba has any inherent semantic realities, i.e. by themselves, they do not mean anything. However, when applied to words in various combinations, they change the meanings of the words. Thus we have

ìgbá	'calabash or display of wares'
ìgbá	'eggplant-like fruit'
ìgbà	'time, era'
ìgbā	'200'
fō àwō	'wash the plate'
fó àwō	'break the plate'
fō āwó	'wash the guinea fowl'
fọ āwó	'to betray' (literally: break up a secret society or cult by revealing secrets or behaving in a manner inappropriate to the members of the society or cult).

There does not seem to be a restriction on the place in a word to which a toneme is limited. Any of the four tones can occur in any syllable of a word.

The fourth toneme, the falling/rising toneme is a combination of any two or all three of the preceding tones. It's occurrence seems to signal

a. that ellision or dropping of a consonant or vowel has taken place

ēgbā	from	ēgbàwá	'2,000'
ẹgbà			'cane'
ẹgba			'bracelet'
ẹgba			'a member of the Egba tribe'
ōrùn	from	ōòrùn	'sun'
ōrùn	"	òórùn	'odor, smell'
ōrūn	"	ōōrūn	'sleep'

b. The circumflex also appears at the boundary of two words, replacing any of the first three tones that appear on the last syllable of the first word in a boundary pair

bàbá	-----	bàbā	Bòsẹ	'Bose's father'
bàtà	-----	bàtā	bàbá	'father's shoes'

In the above example, the circumflex also signals a lengthening of the last vowel in the first word in a boundary pair. It does not signal ellision in this instance because the lengthened vowel or second vowel did not exist as part of the word originally before it became part of the word originally before it became part of the boundary pair.

Words whose meanings are differentiated by semantic tones seem to be limited to groups of two to four words. That I have not found groups of five words or more does not mean that they do not exist. Also, the differentiating function of semantic tones seem to be largely limited to bi-syllabic words, although I found only one instance of a tri-syllable word.

ōbí	'female'
ōbì	'kolanut'
òbí	'parents'
āgbádá	'large flowing gown worn by men'
āgbādā	'large platter'

Semantic tones are not to be confused with stress. In English, regardless of the placement of the stress, the word jump, as a noun or as a verb, still involves the same reality, i.e. the act of jumping. The Yoruba tones, however, involve a complete change in the semantic realities of the word.

ēré	'play'
èrē	'statue'
ērē	'beans'

Ambiguities in Meanings.

Ambiguities in the meanings of words or sentences sometimes arise as a result of the multiple meanings that tones bestow on words or sentences in Yoruba. In Yoruba, semantic tones are a very significant element in the differentiation between the different meanings of a word or utterance. However, sometimes, this is not enough. In some cases, it is not the tonemes of the language, but rather the context of the utterance that makes the meaningful difference between the two meanings of an utterance, e.g.

òbìnrīn nā l'ẹ̀wà	the woman has beauty
òbìnrīn nā l'ẹ̀wà	the woman has beans.

Translations From Other Languages.

The Yoruba language was first reduced to writing by church missionaries from England and America. Consequently, the first written records of the language were translations of the bible and various hymn books. When translations of the hymn books were being made from English to Yoruba, the importance of the tones of Yoruba in meaning was not ignored. However, some tones sometimes ended up being substituted for others in the translators' attempt to fit the Yoruba words into the tunes of the English songs. An example of this substitution of the tones is seen in the song 'O weary heart', translated into Yoruba with the following tones:

òkàn	àrẹ̀	ìlẹ̀	kàn	m̀bẹ̀
heart	weary	home	one	is

spoken, the tones should be

òkàn	ā̀rẹ̀	ìlé	kān	m̀bẹ̀
------	-------	-----	-----	-------

If one were to use the tones of the translated song in speech, it would yield

òkàn	àrẹ̀	ìlẹ̀	kàn	m̀bẹ̀
?	commander	hardness	meet	jumping!

The gloss is as follows:

òkàn	'heart'	ā̀rẹ̀	'weariness'
òkān	'one'	àrẹ̀	'commander of armed forces'
òkàn	?		
ìlé	'home'	kān	'one'
ìlẹ̀	'hardness'	kàn	'meet'
m̀bẹ̀			'is/exists'
m̀bẹ̀			'jumping'

In the refrain to the song, we have:

Dúró,	ròjú	dúró	má	ṣē	kùn		
wait,	meekly	wait	do	not	murmur		
Dúró,	ròjú	dúró	má	ṣē	kún		
wait,	meekly	wait	do	not (be)	full!		
Dùrò,	dúrò,	ṣá	ròjù	dúró	má	ṣē	kún
wait,	wait,	hack	meekly	wait	do not (be)		full!
		(just)					

The gloss is as follows:

kùn	'murmur'	ṣá	'just'
kún	'full'	ṣá	'hack' (with axe)

In lines two and three of the refrain, we have wrong meanings instead of meanings similar to the one we get in line one. Regardless of the aberrant meanings the tunes bestow on the words in the song, the message of the song still gets through. This is so because the aberrant meanings of the tones on the translated tunes make no sense to the Yoruba singer, thus they are ignored or do not come into play. Secondly, the tones of the english tune would *never* be used in speech or when a Yoruba speaker is translating the song for non-english speakers or when she is reading the song for non-readers to sing, so the aberrant meanings do not come into play.

Finally, the rhythmic and semantic tone patterns of the Yoruba language may be transferred from a vocal medium to a non-vocal medium, e.g. the talking drums. This phenomena of the talking drums is a valid mode of communication among people who speak the same dialect.

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The Processes in the Formation of a Lexicon. Bafut: A Study

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Introduction

Bafut is a Kingdom in the Republic of Cameroon. Its language (bɔfɔ:)¹ is still oral and has been classified by the Grassfields Bantu Working Group as belonging to the Ngemba sub-group of the MBAM NKAM, a sub-division of the Grassfields Bantu Language family (see Stallcup 1980², Leroy 1977³). The processes of lexical formation in this language is examined here in three parts.

PART 1: Illustrates a general phenomenon operating in most Grassfields Bantu languages. The processes involved are the use of either a phonemic glottal stop (ʔ)⁴, the relative duration of sound or length on vowels (:), the use of lexical tones (ˈhigh, ˌlow, ˉmid) or a combination of either of these to expand the lexicon by providing semantic differentiation on words which are otherwise segmentally identical.

PART 2: Deals with the derivation of words from other word classes by the use of affixes.

PART 3: Treats the compounding of words in and outside different word classes to give meanings other than the ones carried by the original compounding words.

Part 1.

Both the glottal stop, length and tones can be used (though not all of these apply on all cases) on a morphological word to give several meanings. In the

following examples, the neutral or mid tone is unmarked. The words with asterisks are homonyms.

BAFUT	GLOSS	BAFUT	GLOSS
aba	scar	ala:	the smithy
abá:	flour	ala'á	country
abà:	bag	ala'à	a wound
*aba'a	door	alu:	foams
*aba'a	a half	alu'u	a punch
abo	hand	ati	a tree
abó:	a hunt party	ati:	waist
abò:	weavels	atu	head
abi:	profit	atu:	refused
abi'i	luggage	aye'è	a broom
abé	sore throat	aye'é	a type of fruit
*abè:	a housing plot	aya	mine
*abè:	fault finding	ayá	why
abé:	outside	aya:	a path
abe'e	shoulder	ayo	yours
abu	wood ash	ayo:	something
abù:	ridge	ayo'o	a place for basking
abú:	ribs	*ayi	his/hers
abu'u	slave	*ayi	knowledge
aki	a wooden bowl	*ayi'i	ours
aki:	a trench	*ayi'i	a hurdle
aki'i	a stool		

Part 2

Word Derivation

Although the corresponding verbs may not always be found anymore, it seems the basic word class in Bafut is the verb, from which the rest of the classes are derived, either directly or indirectly, by the use of a number of affixes.

The data presented here illustrates the use of affixes such as: N-, Ni-, mi-, a-, l-, ta-, ma-, -nə, -kə, -sə, -tə, -ə, -si and -ti for lexical derivation.

2.1 Noun Derivation

The affixes used for noun derivation are dependent on the root of the noun class membership. The examples in this paper are grouped according to their derivational affixes.

2.1.1 The Derivational Prefix /N-/

Prenasalization is a frequent derivational device found principally with noun classes 9, 10, and to a lesser extent with classes 1 and 3. There are four semantic relationships associated with this derivation - actor, object, abstract and participial. These are illustrated as follows:

VERB	GLOSS	NOUN	GLOSS	S.RELATION
fwi:	thatch	m-fwi:	thatcher	actor
swye	peck	n-swye	pecking	part
fə'ə	blow	m-fə'ə	a cold	object
ki'i	slice	N-ki'i	operation	abstr.
kweti	help	N_kweti	helper	actor
li'i	poison	n-li'i	poison	object

2.1.2 The Derivational Prefix /ni-/

The derivational prefix *ni-* is the prefix for noun class 5. It derives nouns from verbs as in the following:

VERB	GLOSS	NOUN	GLOSS
gha:	speak	ni-gha	speech
zi	come	ni-zi	journey
gho:	beat	ni-gho:	sickness
dori	play	ni-dori	a play
we	laugh	ni-we	laughter

2.1.3 The Derivational Prefix /mi-/

The derivational prefix *mi-* is the prefix for noun class 6. It derives nouns from verbs as in the following:

ji	eat	mi-ji	food
tu	spit	mi-tw'e	saliva
t'u:	pay	mi-tu-ni	payment
je:	urinate	mi-je:	urine

2.1.4 The Derivational Prefix /a-/

The derivational prefix *a-* is the prefix for noun class 7. It derives nouns from verbs as in the following:

kwe'e	cough	a-kwe'e	a cough
bi'i	carry	a-bi'i	luggage
fani	miss	a-fani	abomination
to'o	support	a-to'o	pillar
di'iti	advise	a-di'ti	advice

2.1.5 The Derivational Prefix /i-/

The derivational prefix *i-* is the prefix for noun classes 3 and 8. It derives nouns from verbs as in the following:

VERB	GLOSS	NOUN	GLOSS
fa'a	work	i-fa'a	work
ywi	breathe	i-ywi	souls
ko'o	climb	i-ko'o	ladder
lwi'isi	end	i-lwi'isi	the end
sa'a	judge	i-sa'a	a case

2.1.6 The Derivational Morphemes /ta-/ and /ma-/

The morphemes *ta-* and *ma-* can both be used as prefixes and pre-prefixes to derive nouns. They have a masculine/feminine contrast and do not feature as noun class prefixes as the ones examined above. The semantic relationship found in these morphemes are those of actor and actress respectively. Examples of their occurrence are found in the following:

VERB	GLOSS	NOUN	NOUN	GLOSS
fi'i	remove	m-fi'i	ta-m-fi'i	remover
fa'a	work	a-fa'a	ta-a-fa'a	employer
ji	eat	mi-ji	ma-mi-ji	a glutton
gha:	speak	ni-gha:	ma-ni-gha:	orator
dori	play	ni-dori	ma-ni-dori	player

2.2 Verb Derivation

Instances of verbs which are derived from other word classes have not been noticed. There are, however, derivations found from intransitive to transitive and from transitive to intransitive verbs. Both these derivations involve the use of suffixes.

2.2.1 Changing Transitive Verbs to Intransitive Ones

The verb suffixes *-nə* and *-kə* when used can convert transitive sentences into intransitive ones. The agent of the sentence is often deleted while the object of the transitive sentence becomes the subject of the intransitive verb. Examples 7a and 8a below are transitive while 7b and 8b are intransitive.

7a ma Na'a mə aba'a
 I open p1 door
 "I have opened the door.

7b aba'a ya Na'a-nə
 door the open
 "The door has opened."

8a ma fe: njo: ja
 I untie things my
 "I have untied my things."

8b njo: ja feN-kə
 things my loose
 "My things got loose."

2.2.2 Changing Intransitive Verbs to Transitive Ones

The verb suffixes *-sə* and *-tə* when added to intransitive verbs convert them to transitive ones. Examples 9a and 10a are intransitive while 9b and 10b are transitive.

9a mu noN (nibi:)
 baby suck breast
 "The baby sucked (the breast)."

9b ndi li noN-sə mu
 mother p2 suckle baby
 "Mother suckled the baby."

10a a tə: manji
 he stand road
 "He is standing on the road."

10b a tə:tə mikori me
 he stand feet my
 "He trampled on my feet."

2.2.3 Deriving a Verb From Another Verb

The suffix *-nə* which bears the semantic relationship of excessiveness can derive a verb from another verb.

11a a yu'u anu
 he hear something
 "He heard something."

11b a yu'u-nə ta: yi
 he obey father his
 "He obeys his father."

12a a ke'e nibu'u
 he untie bundle
 He untied a "bundle."

12b	a	ke'e-nə	wumbo
	he	inform	him
	"He informed him of. . ."		

2.3 Derivation of Adjectives

Most adjectives in Bafut are derived from verbs through a process of affixation. Some of them are homophonic with the verb while others are simply verb roots.

2.3.1 Adjectives as Verb Roots

Despite the assertion in 2.2, the possibility is that the verbs below whose roots are adjectives might have actually been derived from adjectives through affixation.

13.	VERB	GLOSS	ADJ.	GLOSS
	baN-ə	be red	baN	red
	fu'u-si	whiten	fu'u	white
	fwe-ti	be cool	fwe	cold
	fə'ə-ni	be blind	fə'ə	blind
	faN-ə	be fat	faN	fat

2.3.2 Verbs Used as Adjectives

Some adjectives are homophoneous with their verbal counterparts, that is, they have the same spellings and the same pronunciation with the verbs from which they are derived.

14.	ya:ri	select	ya:ri	selected
	bo:ni	be gentle	bo:ni	gentle
	jeNni	be sorry	jeNni	sorry
	saNni	be happy	saNni	happy
	mi'i	abandon	mi'i	abandoned

2.3.3 Adjectives Derived Through Affixation

A few of the adjectives are derived from verbs through a process of affixation.

2.3.3.1 Adjectives Derived Through Prefixation

15	VERBS	GLOSS	ADJ.	GLOSS
	kwEti	help	N-kwEti	adjunct
	tswisi	make seated	ti-tswi-wu	absent
	bi:ti	abide	m-bi:ti	abiding

2.3.3.2 *Adjectives Derived Through Suffixation*

16	twEə	twist	twEə-ki	twisted
	bi'i	popped	bi'i-ki	exploded
	sa'a	tear	sa'a-ki	torn
	gori	bend	gori-ki	arched
	waki-si	shake loose	waki-ki	loose

2.3.4 *Reduplicated Adjectives*

Some adjectives are derived from verbs through a process of reduplication. When the reduplicated word is an adjective, the first part functions as an intensifier.

2.3.4.1 *Reduplicated Verbs*

17	khi	burn	khikhi	burnt
	wE	laugh	wEwE	laughing stock
	Nki (noun)	water	NkiNki	watery
	yə'ə	cry	yə'yə	sobbing child
	ji	eat	jiji	gluttonous

2.3.4.2 *Reduplicated Adjectives*

18	ADJ	GLOSS	ADJ	GLOSS
	fi:	black	fi:fi:	very black
	baN	red	baNbaN	very red
	fu'u	white	fu'ufu'u	very white
	sa'a	long	sa'asa'a	very long
	li:	sweet	li:li:	very sweet

Alternatively, an intensifying suffix /-mə:/ could be used to produce the same meanings as the intensified adjectives above. Thus, we have baN-mə: "very red", fu'u-mə: "very white", etc.

2.4 *Derivation of Adverbs*

A number of adverbs are formed by a process of pronoun and adjective reduplication while a few may be identified as derivations from verbs.

2.4.1 *Reduplication*

19	PRONOUN	GLOSS	ADVERB	GLOSS
	mə	me	məmə	alone (I)
	yu	him/her	yuyu	alone (she/he)
	wo	you	wowo	alone (you)
	bo	them	bobo	alone (they)

20	ADJ	GLOSS	ADVERB	GLOSS
	si'i	much	si'isi'i	too much
	la	like	lala	like that
	IE:ti	foolish	IE:tiIE:ti	foolishly
	mba'a	cloudy	mba'amba'a	early
	ta'aki	stagger	ta'akita'aki	staggerly

2.4.2 Derivation of Adverbs From Verbs

21	VERBS	GLOSS	ADV	GLOSS
	bu'usi	wake	bu'u'ni	aback
	wi'ini	be awake	wi'i'ki	aback
	kiri	look	kiri	awake
	biri	be ablaze	biri	ablaze
	ku'usi	add	ku'usi	again

Part 3

3 Compound Morphology

Some compounding has already been seen in 2.3.4 and 2.4 above in relation to the derivation of adjectives and adverbs. Most of the compounding words, however, are from noun and noun related classes.

3.1 Noun and Noun Compounds

The most common type of compound is the combination of two nouns. Typically, a prefix which means 'the people of', combines with the name of a place.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 22 | ba + awum → Bawum | ba + niko: → Baniko: |
| | ba + nji: → Banji: | ba + akosia → Bakosia |
| | ma + nka'a → Manka'a | ma + nji: → Manji: |
| | ma + nka: → Manka: | ma + nkwi → Mankwi |
| 23 | Some compounds are identified because the second noun modifies the first one. | |
| | mbi + ndoN → mbi ndoN | nte'e + nda → nte'e nda |
| | goat horn 'goat' | pillar house 'pillar' |
| | nda + nwi → nda nwi | atu + nda → atu nda |
| | house God 'church' | head house 'roof' |

Some compounds are formed by reference to a location and then the name of the location itself.

- 24 ntsu + Nki → ntsu Nki atu + Nki → atu Nki
 mouth water 'river bank' head water 'up stream'
 ntii + abE: → ntii abE: atu + abE: → atu abE:
 compound 'lower compound' head compound 'upper compound'

Many compound words are found with the word mu "child", which may be added to almost every noun (with the exception of abstracts). It has a diminutive function. The word mu always precedes the other noun, although it is the modifying element.

- 25 mu + maNgyE → mu maNgyE mu + ati → mu ati
 child woman "girl" child tree "seedling"
 mu + mbaNni → mu mbaNni mu + Ngo'o → mu Ngo'o
 child man "boy" child stone small stone
 mu + swEyakori → mu swEakori
 child foot "toe"

The opposite of the diminutive, that is, the augmentative, also occurs. It is formed by compounding nouns with the word ma "mother."

- 26 ma + mbi → ma mbi ma + kwiyam → makwiyam
 mother goat "nanny" mother pig "sow"
 Ma + kau → makau ma + Ngu → ma Ngu
 mother cow "cow" mother hen "hen"

3.2 Verb and Noun Compounds

Another, but less common, type of compound is composed of a verb and a noun.

- 27 swi: + mbo: → swi mbo:
 suck egg "egg-eating snake"
 jE: + Nda → jE: nda
 urinate house "a bed-wetting child"
 ji + nda → njinda
 eat house "successor"
 bu'uti + ati → bu'uti ati
 peck tree → "wood-pecker"

3.3 Compound Pronouns

Compound pronouns in Bafut are mostly dual and plural, formed by compounding two simple free pronouns.

28	bi'i + ni →	bi'ini
	we you-pl	we-inclusive
	bi'i + yu - sg →	bi'iyu
	we he	we-exclusive
	bu + bo →	bubo
	you-pl they	you-pl-exclusive
	bu + yu →	buyu
	you-pl he-sg	you-pl-exclusive

It should be noted that the exclusive pronouns either exclude the speaker or the listener.

3.4 Compound Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronoun in Bafut has a well developed compounding system which reflects the noun class membership of the nouns they represent. It is possible, for example, to compound the 1st and 2nd persons, the 1st and 3rd persons, the 2nd and 3rd persons and the 3rd and 3rd persons, all of these showing a singular/plural dichotomy.

Because the possessive has to reflect the noun class of the object involved, the initial consonant of the possessive identifies the noun class membership (of the head noun), while the remaining fragment identifies the person/number distinctions of the pronoun (although the free pronoun form cannot always be recognized).

n.cl.	PERSONS			
	1 + 2		1 + 3	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1	yi'o	yi'inə	yi'iyu	yi'ibo
2	bi'o	bi'inə	bi'iyu	bi'ibo
3	yi'o	yi'inə	yi'iyu	yi'ibo
5	ni'o	ni'inə	ni'iyu	ni'ibo
6	mi'o	mi'inə	mi'iyu	mi'ibo
7	yi'o	yi'inə	yi'iyu	yi'ibo
8	ji'o	ji'inə	ji'iyu	ji'ibo
9	yi'o	yi'inə	yi'inu	yi'ibo
10	ji'o	ji'inə	ji'iyu	ji'ibo
11	fi'o	fi'inə	fi'iyu	fi'ibo
mine + yours = ours exclusive of others		mine + yours = ours inclusive	mine + his = ours exclusive of the listener	mine + theirs = ours exclusive of the listener

n.cl.	PERSONS			
	2 + 3		3 + 3	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1	ghu:yu	ghu:bo	wa:yu	wa:bo
2	bu:yu	bu:bo	byayu	byabo
3	ghu:yu	ghu:bo	wa:yu	wa:bo
5	nu:yu	nu:bo	nyayu	nyabo
6	mu:yu	mu:bo	myayu	myabo
7	ghu:yu	ghu:bo	ya:yu	ya:bo
8	ju:yu	ju:bo	jyayu	jyabo
9	ghu:yu	ghu:bo	ya:yu	ya:bo
10	ju:yu	ju:bo	jyayu	jyabo
11	fu:yu	fu:bo	fyayu	fyabo
	yours + his = yours exclusive of the speaker	yours + theirs = yours exclusive of the speaker	his + his = theirs exclusive of the speaker/ listener	his + theirs = theirs exclusive of the speaker/ listener

It is worth noting that quite a number of the affixes seen in this paper can be used on the same stem to derive various meanings. This is evident in the following examples.

bin	“dance!”	ji	“eat!”
m-bin-ə	“dancing”	m-ji	“eating”
a-bin	“a dance”		
		mi-ji	“food (sing.)
ká:	“be tired”	ni-ji	“food (pl.)
N-ká:	“tiring”	a-ji	“something to eat for free.”
ni-KEá:	“tiredness”		

This paper has attempted to document the various processes involved in the formation of a Bafut lexicon. It cannot be claimed that the processes have been adequately described. It is however believed that, since this is an initial work on this topic in Bafut, ground work has been laid on which further and more detail research can be carried out.

Notes

1. The Bafut people call themselves bəfə: and their language bəfə: as well. Bafut is an anglicised form of bəfə:.
2. Stallcup, Kenneth. 1980. *La Géographie Linguistique des Grassfields*. in *L'EXPANSION BANTOUE*, S.E.L.A.F., Paris, pp. 43–57.
3. Leroy, Jacqueline, 1977. *Morphologie et Classes Nominales en Mankon*, S.E.L.A.F., Paris pp. 61–62.
4. In this paper examples are given in the currently used orthography for Cameroon languages. There are the following deviations from the IPA system:

[ʔ] → '	[ɣ] → gh
[ɲ] → ny	[j] → y
[s] → sh	[ɛ] → E
[dz] → j	[ŋ] → N

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