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## GRAMMAR SKETCH OF YEMBA

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this paper:

ADJ	adjective
AN	anaphoric
ANT	anterior
ASS	associative
AUX	auxiliary verb
AV	associative vowel
C	class
C1	class one (out of nine) noun prefix
CAT	cataphoric
CERT	certain
CM	consecutive marker
COMP	complementizer
CONC	concord
COOR	coordinator
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DIR	directional
DISC	discourse marker
DS	different subject
EMP	emphatic
F1	near future tense (today)
F2	less near future tense (tomorrow)
F3	middle future tense
F4	general future tense
F5	distant future tense
FOC	focus
H	high tone
!H	downstepped high
HAB	habitual aspect
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfective
INDEF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
INT	interrogative
IR	irrealis
L	low tone
LF	low-falling tone
LOC	locative
LOG	logophoric
M	mid tone (downstepped high)
N	noun, or homorganic nasal
N1	first noun
NEG	negative
NH	near hearer
NS	near speaker
NUM	numeral
OJ	object

Ø-	zero prefix
p	plural
P1	recent past tense (today)
P2	less recent past tense (yesterday)
P3	middle past tense
P4	general past tense
P5	remote past tense
PFV	perfective aspect
PHR	phrase
POS	possessive
POST	posterior
PR	present tense
PREP	preposition
PRN	pronoun
PRO	progressive aspect
QUAL	qualifying modifier
R	realis
REL	relative pronoun
s	singular
SJ	subject
SS	same subject
V	verb
vd.	voiced
vl.	voiceless
1s	first person singular
2s	second person singular
3s	third person singular
1p	first person plural
2p	second person plural
3p	third person plural

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Yémba language, also known as Bamiléké-Dschang, is spoken in the Menoua department of the Western province. With only one exception, the language is spoken in all the villages of the department. The data for the following sketch grammar was gathered in the village of Bafou, a grouping of several villages covering an area of 200 square kilometres, comprising around 50,000 inhabitants, and located about 10 kilometers north-east of Dschang.

Our research began in August 1983 and has continued with an interruption of one year up to the present time. (June, 1991). Without the kind help of the following friends in Bafou, we would not have been able to accomplish this sketch: GNINTEDEM Jean-Claude, GUIMEYA Gaston, TSAGUE Gabriel, and TSOMEJIO Albert.

This particular sketch grammar is intended for educated speakers of the language who are not necessarily trained as linguists. The amount of technical jargon is kept to a minimum but some is included for those who want to pursue things further. The intention is to provide a useful tool to mother tongue speakers of Yémba so that they can understand, appreciate and teach others the intricacies of this language. As a document of reference it does not always have a pedagogical approach but instead attempts to summarise the regularities and major points. It might also be considered useful by those interested in developing grammars for related languages.

We do not pretend to attempt here an in-depth analysis of any one area, but to cover a broad scope of topics, the range of which is not exhaustive. The major grammatical structures will be presented, often in the form of paradigms. The tone rules are especially complex in Yémba, and therefore will not be treated in their entirety. Instead we will present the most important changes in paradigmatic form.

The organization of the sketch grammar is the following:

- I. Introduction
- II. Phonological Sketch
- III. Sentence Types
- IV. Nouns
- V. Pronouns
- VI. Noun Modifiers
- VII. Noun Phrase
- VIII. Verb and Verb Phrase
- IX. Verb Modifiers
- X. Verb Complements

## 1.0 PHONOLOGY SKETCH

### 1.1 Consonants

In Yémba there are 24 phonemes, 17 of which are consonants and 7 of which are vowels. The consonants can be arranged according to the following chart:

### (1) CONSONANT PHONEMES

	ANT	CENT	POST	GLOT
STOPS	vd. b vl.	d t	g k	'
FRICATIVES	vd. v vl. f	z s		
AFFRICATES	pf	ts		
NASALS	m	n	ŋ	
LIQUIDS	w	y		

Some analyses would also include /tš/, /ž/ and /š/ as phonemes. It is true that the current orthography includes these three as graphemes, viz., c, j, and sh. In the interests of economy and elegance, a more abstract analysis considers them as allophones of /ts/, /z/, and /s/ respectively. In addition, [p] is considered an allophone of /b/ and [l] an allophone of /d/. These two allophones, along with h and r (see 2.3 Prosodies), are also included in the current orthography, raising the total number of consonants in the alphabet to 24.

All of the above consonants can appear at the beginning of a syllable with the exception of the glottal stop '. Those consonants which can occur at the end of a syllable, however, are fewer in number, viz., b,d,g,m,n.

Another phenomenon to notice is what is called consonant alternation. These allophonic variations are occasioned by the presence or absence of syllabic nasals. The regularity of the changes can be summarised in the following way:

### (2) Consonant Alternations

/b/	[b]	alternates with [p]:	[mbá]	and	[ləpā]	"to cover"
/d/	[d]	alternates with [l]:	[ndá]	and	[ləlā]	"to cook"
/g/	[g]	alternates with [ɣ]:	[ŋgāp]	and	[ləgāp]	"to share"
/w/	[w]	alternates with [gw]:	[ŋgwē]	and	[ləwε]	"to have"
/y/	[y]	alternates with [gy]:	[ŋgyá]	and	[ləyā]	"to give"

### 1.2 Vowels

The 7 vowel phonemes of Yémba can be arranged according to the following chart:

### (3) VOWEL PHONEMES

	ANT	CENT	POST
CLOSED	i		u
MID	e		o
OPEN	ε	a	ɔ



Some analyses would also include /u/ as a phoneme. It is included in the current orthography as a grapheme, but again in the interests of economy and elegance, the more abstract analysis considers it as a palatalisation of /u/ (see 2.3 Prosodies).

### 1.3 Prosodies

A prosodic analysis of the Yémba sound system results in an analysis more abstract and yet more elegant and economical. The four prosodies are palatalisation (symbolised by <Y>), labialisation <W>, aspiration <H>, and length <L>. These four singly and in varying combinations with each other account for a widespread distribution of these phenomena throughout Yémba in an economical way.

As already mentioned, the Yémba alphabet includes graphemes other than phonemes, viz., c,j,sh,p,l,u. The prosodies of <Y>, <W> and <H> are written orthographically with the respective lower case graphemes of y,w,h. On the other hand, the prosody of <L> is written in its phonetic realisation. There are two different types of phonetic realisations possible: either a sequence of the same two vowels (aa) or a predictable sequence of high and then low vowels (ic, uc).

### 1.4 Tone

As a tonal language, Yémba has both lexical and grammatical tone. The lexical tones serve to distinguish lexical items from each other and the grammatical tones indicate some grammatical function.

An abstract analysis of the tones indicates that there are only two underlying tones, high (H) and low (L). In combination with floating high and low tones which are not attached to any one particular sound, the resulting surface tones can be shown to be four (TADADJEU 1974:84-85). These can be called high, downstepped high (or mid for the orthography), low, and falling low. These four possibilities are shown following a low tone noun class prefix. The writing of tone is shown both phonemically, where downstepped high is indicated by lá, and orthographically, where it is indicated by ā.

#### (4) LEXICAL TONES

	PHONEMIC	ORTHOGRAPHIC	
HIGH	lètón	letón	"feather"
!HIGH	lè!tón	letón	"reading"
LOW	lètòn	leton	"bellybutton"
LOW			
FALLING	lètòñ	leton	"paying back"

The way of writing tone in the orthography does not distinguish between the two types of LOW tones since it is not critical for reading and writing for mother tongue speakers.

Grammatical tone is used to distinguish one grammatical construction from another. It is found in the associative construction (see 7.4), verb tenses (see 8.2), mood (see 8.4), and consecutive constructions (see 10.4).

## 1.5 Syllable Structure

There are basically 4 syllable types in Yémba. These are V, CV, CVC and N. The V-type syllables are often used to indicate grammatical functions such as the locative, negation, anaphoric subjects, noun class agreement markers in the associative construction, and subject and object concord markers. The two vowels which function in this capacity are *a* and *e*, both of which provoke vowel harmony which takes into consideration both the preceding vowel and the functor vowel (*a* or *e*). The CV- and CVC-type syllables are often the noun and verb roots or lexemes, since these are often monosyllabic. The N-type syllable is used as a noun class prefix (classes 1,3,6,9), an abbreviated form of the first person singular pronoun subject, marker of P2 tense, consecutive marker, realis marker.

## 2.0 SENTENCE TYPES

In Yémba the normal word order is S V O. Negation can introduce an optional change where the order becomes S NEG O V.

### 2.1 Declarative Sentences

In declarative sentences, whether with transitive or intransitive verbs, a distinction is made between what needs to follow the subject, depending on whether the subject is a pronoun or a noun. A pronoun subject, whether singular or plural, may be immediately followed by verbal elements, whether indicators of tense, mood, or aspect. The verb used in these examples is *ńzík* "to yawn".

- |                     |                  |                |                    |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| (5) <i>a zik- e</i> | <i>pó zik- e</i> | <i>a á zik</i> | <i>a ke zík- ē</i> |
| he yawn-PR          | they yawn-PR     | he P1 yawn     | he P3 yawn-P3      |
| "he yawns"          | "they yawn"      | "he yawned"    | "he yawned"        |

On the other hand, a noun subject must be followed by the subject concord marker that is in agreement with the noun class of the subject. In the following examples, this concord marker is identified as the anaphoric subject indicator of the necessary noun class.

- |                     |               |                   |               |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| (6) <i>ø- sén a</i> | <i>zik- e</i> | <i>a- pu' á</i>   | <i>zik- e</i> |
| c1-bird c1ANSJ      | yawn-PR       | c7-slave c7ANSJ   | yawn-PR       |
| "the bird yawns"    |               | "the slave yawns" |               |

When the verb in the declarative sentence is transitive and has an explicit object noun phrase as a complement, there is another concord marker after all the verbal elements, which is in agreement with the noun class of the object. The noun classes affected by this are effectively only classes 1 and 9, where the concord elements are *a* and *a* respectively. In the following examples, this concord marker is identified as the CATOJ, cataphoric object indicator of the necessary noun class. Whether the complement is a full noun phrase, a noun, or an object pronoun (see 5.1.2), the set of concord markers remains the same. The noun class of the object pronouns corresponds to class 1 for the singulars and class 2 for the plurals. The verbs used in the following examples are *ńkán* "fry" and *ńkān* "choose".

- (7) a á k̄an á Ø- kaŋ a á kaŋ a a- len  
 he P1 fry c1CATOJ c1-squirrel he P1 choose c7CATOJ c7-chair  
 "he fried the squirrel" "he chose the chair"

The same object pronoun, yí "3s PRN", is used whether in order to refer to animate or inanimate objects of whatever class. As mentioned before, this yí is always treated as class 1 in terms of agreement requirements.

- (8) a á k̄an á yí a á kaŋ á yí  
 he P1 fry c1CATOJ OJPRN he P1 choose c1CATOJ OJPRN  
 "he fried it (squirrel)" "he chose it (chair)"

## 2.2 Question Sentences

Question sentences can be classified as yes-no questions or content questions. The content questions ask for information about the subject (who, what), the object (who, what), the indirect object (to whom), or an adverbial condition (how, where, when). The yes-no questions contain information which is to be verified or denied, often with a simple yes or no answer.

The yes-no type questions are formed by adding a low tone single vowel morpheme to the last word in the sentence. When the last word ends in a vowel or nasal, the morpheme added is that vowel or nasal. When the last word ends in a consonant, the morpheme added is e. The quality of this vowel may vary slightly but it remains basically a front non-low vowel.

Single word questions using personal pronouns have an interesting perturbation of the low tone morpheme. The personal pronouns except for third person plural end in low tones. The numbers indicate approximate intervals, with 1 being highest and the other numbers lower.

### (9) Pronouns as Single Word Questions and Responses

	QUESTION	DECLARATIVE
1s	meŋ-ŋ 3 4	meŋ 3-5
2s	wu-u 3 4	o 3-5
3s	yí-i 1 5	a 3-5
1p	peke 2 5	pek 3
2	pε-ε 2 5	pε 3
3p	póp-e 1 5	póp 1

The content questions have their own particular interrogative pronoun forms (see 5.5) or other construction. In addition, when the interrogative pronoun fits into the subject slot, there is the added vowel and low tone which characterise the yes-no question type.

The word order in the content questions is the same as the declarative counterpart. An example of this would be if you wanted to know where someone had gone, the indefinite interrogative pronoun *é!gó* "where?" is placed in the same slot as the desired information would be in the declarative answer.

(10) declarative sentence: a gyo me esã  
he go DIR market  
"he is going to the market"

content question: a gyo me é!gó  
he go DIR where  
"where is he going?"

### 2.3 Presentation sentences

Presentation sentences have a deictic component in that they indicate the location of something at the same time as bringing it to one's attention. The form of this sentence is such that the object presented is followed by a form of the demonstrative pronoun that is difficult to analyse (see 5.3). The possible tone perturbations are not easily traceable to a specific underlying tone or form. So the forms are presented as is for further analysis.

(11) "Here/there is ...."  
 "Here it is"

"This/that ....."

NOUN/PRONOUN	DEM-NS	DEM-NH	NOUN	DEM-NS	DEM-NH
e -fɔ 3 3 c1-chief	a- wuɔ 3 44 ? here	ā- wɔ 2 2 there			
∅ -sɛŋ 1 c1-bird	a- wuɔ 4 44 ? here	a- wɔ 4 3 ? there			
ŋ -kāp 2 c9-money here	e- jɔɔ 4 55 ? here	e- jɔ 5 4 ? there	ŋ -kāp 3 2 c9-money	jɔɔ 55 this	jɔ 3 that
a- pu' 3 3 c7-slave here	a- jɔɔ 3 44 ? here	ā- jɔ 2 2 ? there			a jɔɔ 3 44 c7
me-sɔŋ 3 3 c6-tooth	e- mɔɔ 3 44 ? here				
men 3 I	wuɔ 44 here				
o 3 you		ā- wɔ 2 2 ? there			
pɔ 1 they	puɔ 44 here				

The morphemes indicated by ? are those which remain mysterious. Are they related to the demonstrative pronouns but with the first tone perturbed? Or are they agreement markers indicating either subject or object concord? The example that hints that it is not a subject concord marker is o ō wɔ "There you are". The change in tone indicates the probable presence of another morpheme which may be a concord marker rather than a prefix of the demonstrative pronoun. But in the declarative sentence type we have already seen that a pronoun subject does not require a subject concord marker.

This leaves the description of this sentence type up in the air. Is it a noun or pronoun followed by a subject or object concord marker (as though a verbal element were coming or had come) and then a demonstrative adjective? Or is it a noun or pronoun followed by a demonstrative pronoun with perturbed tones?

## 2.4 Identification sentences

Identification sentences are made in response to questions such as, "What is this?", "What/who did such and such?", "What did you see?". The act of identifying also establishes the existence of the subject, so some people prefer the term "existential".

The first two questions cited above both seek more information about the subject or agent. There are two possible forms of response to this type of question. The first is to reply with a complete sentence using the verb *ngó* "to be".

(12) <i>ákō</i>	<i>a gó a sen</i>
INT	c1SJ be c1OJ bird
"What (is it)?"	"It is a bird."

It is not clear at this point why the class 1 object concord marker is a low tone a here. Perhaps there are some tone perturbations due to the specific tense used.

The second form of response is to answer briefly with a single word, using the lexical tones of the word, *sén*.

When the question asks for information about the object, rather than the subject, the tones change for the single word response. The question, "What did you give me?", does not allow a single word response using the lexical tones. Instead, the usual low tone prefix on a noun is changed to a high tone. A low tone (whether simple or falling) on the root remains the same, as does the mid (lowered high) tone. Nouns with prefixes and high tones on the root also seem to have the mid tone on the root. Nouns without prefixes (usually in class 1) and high tones on the root retain the high tone on the root but are preceded by a high tone *á*, which is also the class 1 object concord marker.

### (13) Single Word Object Responses

ISOLATED FORM	OJ RESPONSE FORM
c1 <i>sén</i> "bird"	<i>á sén</i>
c1 <i>pu'</i> "knife"	<i>á pu'</i>
c1 <i>metíta</i> "potatoes"	<i>á metíta</i>
c1 <i>shúu</i> "cabbage"	<i>á shúu</i>
c3 <i>ekō'</i> "ladder"	<i>ékō'</i>
c5 <i>leson</i> "tooth"	<i>léson</i>
c7 <i>apu'</i> "slave"	<i>ápu'</i>
c7 <i>apū'</i> "stick"	<i>ápū'</i>
c9 <i>efon</i> "steer"	<i>éfon</i>

This presence of a high tone is not dependent on noun class and so cannot be considered part of an agreement marking system. Perhaps it is to be considered as a resumptive tone which summarises the previous arguments in the sentence, thus indicating that this response is one for the complement slot. The question remains as to whether or not this would warrant designating this kind of utterance as another sentence type.

## 2.5 Negation

There are two strategies for forming negative sentences in Yémba. The variables are word order and discontinuous morphemes. The usual word order in Yémba is S V O. When the negative particle is introduced, whether *te* "P3 NEG" or *ka* "P2 NEG", before the verb and the normal word order is preserved, a discontinuous morpheme *á* is added to the last element of the clause, whether this is the verb or a complement. When the object is fronted, however, it must also carry this same discontinuous morpheme but with a low tone.

- (14) a *ka zá' m- bap- á*                      a *ka m- bap- a zá'-á*  
he NEG cut c9-meat-NEG                      he NEG c9-meat-NEG cut-NEG  
*"he did not cut the meat"*                      *"he did not cut the meat"*

As already noted, the phonetic realisation of *á* is dependent on vowel harmony rules. These are fully described in KOUESSO (1989:62-65). When the negative marker is *te* and the SOV word order is used, it is not yet clear if the object also has the discontinuous marker.

It could be that there are discourse considerations which determine whether one or the other of these word order strategies is used.

## 3.0 NOUNS

Nouns in Yémba are composed of a lexeme, usually monosyllabic, which is most often preceded by a noun-marking prefix. This noun-marking prefix indicates one of eight possible noun classes, numbered according to the system used for Bantu languages.

### 3.1 Noun Classes

There are eight noun classes in Yémba, but we have not noted a Class 4 in the Yémba system, since Bantu Noun Class 4 is not present. The eight Yémba noun classes group themselves into six genders.

The Yémba noun class system;<sup>1</sup> is a reduction of the classic Bantou system, having only classes 1 through 9 and not class 4. This gives a total of 8 noun classes in Yémba. The system is represented in the following chart:

(15) Noun Classes:

	sing		plural	gender
1	ñ-gè "stranger"-----2		mè-gè	1/2
	ø-káp "pipe"-----2		mè-káp	1/2
3	è-kó "bed"-----6		mè-kó	3/6
	ŋ-kā' "field"-----6		mèn-kā'	3/6
5	lè-sòŋ "tooth"-----6		mè-sòŋ	5/6
9	ṁ-bhū "dog"-----6		mèm-bhū	9/6
7	à-khù "foot"-----6		mè-khù	7/6
	à-pù' "slave"-----8		è-pù'	7/8

These noun classes govern certain agreements within the noun phrase between the head noun and its modifiers, such as possessive pronouns/adjectives, demonstrative pronouns/adjectives, interrogative pronouns/adjectives, some numbers (2 through 5) and quantifiers. In addition, where the noun is represented in a shortened form within a clause, the noun class again governs the agreement between the noun and its representative concord element.

Because the noun prefixes do not always indicate distinctively to which class the noun belongs, we must look to the concord elements in order to see how the nouns are distributed within the eight possible classes. The concord elements the most useful for determining this must be taken in combination with the noun prefix. These elements are the concord consonant and tone which function for the adjectival possessives pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and interrogative pronouns. These concord elements are identified as deictic concord elements in the following chart.



(16) Noun Classes and Concord Elements

Class	Examples	Noun Prefix	Deictic Concord
1	ṅgè "stranger"	N-	g`
1	káp "pipe"	∅-	g`
2	mègè "strangers"	mè-	p`
3	ṅkā' "field"	N-	g`
3	èkó "bed"	è-	g`
5	lèsòṅ "tooth"	lè-	ts`
6	mèsòṅ "teeth"	mè-	m`
6	ṅgwāṅ "oil"	N-	m`
7	àpù' "slave"	à-	z`
8	èpù' "slaves"	è-	ts`
9	èfòṅ "steer"	N-	z`

It should be noted that classes 1, 3 and 6 have the possibility of more than one noun prefix, whereas the other classes have only allophonic variations. These allophonic variations follow the basic rule that a nasal prefix N-, where N = m, n, or ṅ, cannot precede a voiceless fricative, namely f, s, sh. Instead, in these cases, it is realised as e-. An example of this is seen in classes 1 and 9 where we find both ṅgè "stranger" and èfò "chief" in class 1 and mbhū "dog" and èfòṅ "steer cow" in class 9. The appearance of these two different prefixes in these two classes is not significant since they are allophonic variations of the same prefix N-. What is significant are the two possible prefixes in classes 1, 3 and 9, because they are not allophonic variations.

The deictic concord consonant and tone can be illustrated, for example, in the first person singular possessive adjective "my". Each noun class has its distinctive combination of consonant and tone with the basic part of the word, in this case -a to indicate "my" as opposed to -i to indicate "his".

(17) Deictic Concord Elements Combined with Word Base

Class	1	SG	POS	ADJ
1				gà
2				pá
3				gá
5				tsá
6				má
7				zà
8				tsá
9				zà

Because the noun prefixes are not diagnostic determiners of noun class by themselves, we will rearrange this chart to reflect the importance of the deictic concord elements in determining noun class. The only place where these concord elements are not sufficient in themselves for classifying the nouns is in the case of ts'. When its noun has lè- as a prefix, we know the noun has to be class 5. When its noun has è- as a prefix, we know the noun has to be class 8.

(18) Diagnostic Deictic Concord Elements as Indicators of Noun Classes

Consonant	Tone	Noun Prefix	Noun Class
g	L	Ñ-	1
		Ø-	1
	H	Ñ-	3
		è-	3
p	H	mè-	2
ts	H	lè-	5
		è-	8
m	H	mè-	6
		Ñ-	6
z	H	à-	7
	L	Ñ-	9

There are other concord elements which are not diagnostic indicators in and of themselves. These are more on the clause level and take up the noun again in a reduced representation, most often the vowels. A subject pronoun making reference to a known noun has to reflect the noun class of the noun. There are three other types of noun concord which occur between the full subject and the beginning of the verb phrase, between the end of the verb phrase and the object, and between two nouns in a genitive ("associative") kind of construction. These could be called respectively subject concord, object concord, and associative concord. These non-diagnostic concord elements are not always pronounced in rapid speech or if they are, they have often undergone specific rules which have changed their pronunciation. These rules of vowel changes can be found in TADADJEU (1980:175-178) and KOUESSO (1989:\*\*\*\*). In general we could say that the concord vowels e and a are weaker than the vowels in the words preceding them. When the stronger vowels are i, a, o, the concord vowels are totally absorbed and disappear. When the stronger vowels are ε, o, e, the concord vowels provoke a new sequence of vowels characterised by a high vowel (either i, u, or u) followed by a low vowel (either ε or o). which either absorb the concord vowels.

(19) Other Concord Elements According to Usage and Noun Class

Tone	CONC	PRN SJ	SJ CONC	OJ CONC	ASS CONC
H	é	3,5,6,8	2,3,5,6,8		2,3,5,6,8
	á	7	7	1	7
	pó	2			
L	è	9	9	2,3,5,6,8,9	1,9
	à	1	1	7	

If one were to search for a semantic classification behind the noun class system in Yémba, there would be many holes. What can be said is that this or that noun class usually includes a certain semantic grouping but is not limited to it. For instance, in classes 1 and 2 we find words indicating persons or totemic animals, monosyllabic words, and borrowed words. In classes 5 and 6 are paired body parts and the nominalized infinitives, in class 6 are mass nouns.

### 3.2

#### Derivation

Nouns can be derived in one of two ways in Yémba: nominalisation of lexical verbs or reduplication of noun roots. The method of derivation from lexical verbs is the assignment of a noun class marker to the verb root. The noun class markers which have been observed to be available are those of classes 3 (e-), 5 (le-), 7 (a-), and 9 (N-). Some examples of these are given below.

(20)	ñkā	"to swear"	=>	eka	"covenant"	CLASS 3
	ñkó'	"to climb up"	=>	ekō'	"ladder"	
	ésá	"to split"	=>	esā	"slice"	
	ñcō'	"to fear"	=>	ecō'	"fear"	
	ñkāk	"to rejoice"	=>	lekāk	"joy"	CLASS 5
	ñkó'	"to climb up"	=>	lekō's	"hill"	
	léfāk	"to split up"	=>	lefak	"twin"	
	ñcūŋ	"to knot"	=>	lecūŋ	"knot"	
	ñzēŋ	"to twist"	=>	lezēŋ	"hernia"	
	ñkán	"to fry"	=>	akāŋ	"frying pan"	CLASS 7
	ñgō	"to be sick"	=>	ago	"sickness"	
	éshūŋní	"to converse"	=>	ashūŋne	"conversation"	
	mbūŋ	"to lack"	=>	mbūŋ	"poor person"	CLASS 9
	ñcōp	"to poison"	=>	ncōp	"poison"	
	ñcūp	"to contribute"	=>	ncūp	"contribution"	

A noun class in Yémba does not represent a single all-encompassing semantic notion, though a small grouping of semantic notions can be included in a noun class. Examples of this are bodyparts (certain ones) in classes 5 and 7 and animals (certain ones) in class 9. Neither of these two semantic notions, body parts and animals, seems to have any bearing on the derivations presented here.

In categorizing the kinds of nouns that result from this process of derivation from lexical verbs, we would make the general distinction that COMRIE and THOMPSON (1985:349) make between nouns of activity or state (Class A) and nouns of argument production (Class B).

Class A derived nouns all fall into noun class 5 with the *le-* class prefix. They designate the fact of that verb and occur in specific grammatical constructions such as "I like to cut" or "his cutting". Any verb can theoretically undergo this Class A type of nominalisation.

Class B derivations, on the other hand, occur only with a limited (closed?) set of verbs and the resulting derivations "create the name of one of the arguments of the verb" (COMRIE and THOMPSON 1985:350). There are 6 possible types of nouns in Class B: agentive, instrumental, manner, locative, objective and reason. Of these 6 possible types, we find 4 actually present in *yémba*.

Agentive nominalisation refers to nouns which indicate "one who is/does this verb" and need not be an agent in the strictest sense of the word. With intransitive verbs this term would refer to the semantic notion of patient instead of agent. This kind of nominalisation always refers to animates. Examples found in *Yémba* are the following:

(21) Agentive Nominalisation

ńzwīŋ	"être vieux"	=>	nzwīŋ	"old person"	CLASS 1
ńkíŋ	"to lack"	=>	ńkíŋ	"sterile person"	
ńtswéttí	"to rejoin"	=>	ntswétti	"first assistant"	
mbūŋ	"to lack"	=>	mbūŋ	"poor person"	CLASS 9
ńzōŋ	"to act hastily"	=>	nzōŋ	"scoundrel"	

Two of these five nominalisations are not found in class 1 but in class 9, even though they refer to human beings but characterised in terms of a social label which is not inalienable. As nouns of class 9 the plural forms of these two words belong to class 6, not to class 2, the plural class of class 1 singulars.

There are some other examples of this kind of nominalisation which are not strictly regular:

(22)	ésā'	"arracher"	=>	asa'a	"second assistant"	CLASS 7
	ésōp	"piocher"	=>	asōp	"eldest son"	
	mbíá	"to go crazy"	=>	apíá	"crazy person"	
	éfāk	"to split"	=>	lefak	"twin"	CLASS 5

The first of these two have the singular form in class 7 but the plural form in class 2, not in class 6 which is the expected class. This becomes evident by looking at the deictic concord consonant used for these two in the plural, *p*. Perhaps the placement of "twin" in class 5 is consistent with the semantic notion of "paired body parts" which is possible for this class, but it is the only one referring to a human being in this class.

Instrumental nominalisation indicates "an instrument for doing this". Some examples in *Yémba* are the following:

(23) Instrumental nominalisation

ńbú'	"to tap"	=>	apū'	"tapping stick"	CLASS 7
ńbá	"to cover"	=>	apá	"heavy lid"	
ńdé	"to say"	=>	alē	"tongue"	
ńdú	"to seize magically"	=>	alū	"magic"	
ńkēńé	"to obstruct visually"	=>	akęnc	"door (trad.)"	
ńkán	"to fry"	=>	akāń	"frying pan"	
ńgō	"to be sick"	=>	agō	"sickness"	
éshwī	"to refuse"	=>	aswhī	"greediness"	
éshú	"to hoe"	=>	ashū	"hoe"	
ńtsó'	"to pound"	=>	atsō'	"pestle"	
ńdú'	"to search"	=>	lelū'	"spoon"	CLASS 5
ńtó	"to cross over"	=>	ntō	"bridge"	CLASS 3
ńcūń	"to purge"	=>	ncuń	"purging apparatus"	
ńkó'	"monter"	=>	ekō'	"ladder"	
éśā	"to rip open"	=>	esia	"ability to cast a spell"	
ńcōp	"to poison"	=>	ncōp	"poison"	CLASS 9

Locative nominalisation indicates that the resultant noun means "a place where the verb happens". Examples of this in Yémba are the following:

(24) Locative nominalisation

ńmí	"to swallow"	=>	ami	"throat"	CLASS 7
ńnō'	"to sow"	=>	anō'	"king's palace"	
ńtsē	"to urinate"	=>	atse	"bladder"	
ńjhú	"to eat"	=>	ajhú	"stomach"	
ńzōkó	"to finish"	=>	lezokó	"place of finishing"	

Objective nominalisation refers to nouns which indicate the result or proto-typical object of an action. This corresponds roughly to Longacre's semantic notions of range (R) and goal (G). Examples in Yémba are the following:

## (25) Objective nominalisation

mbāk	"to break"	=>	apak	"section"	CLASS 7
mbí	"to lose"	=>	apī	"loss"	
mbýó'	"to break"	=>	apyō'	"unequal part"	
éfē'	"to sacrifice"	=>	afe'	"sacrifice"	
éfū'	"to measure"	=>	afū'	"season"	
éfā'	"to search"	=>	afa'	"work"	
mvū'ó	"to escape"	=>	avu'	"what is left"	
éswīntí	"to entreat"	=>	aswīnte	"entreaty"	
éshūŋní	"to converse"	=>	ashūŋne	"conversation"	
ńzík	"to yawn"	=>	azíkí	"odor"	
ńzī'né	"to be sweaty"	=>	azi'ne	"sweat"	
ńzōp	"to sing"	=>	azōp	"song"	
ńtswík	"to cough"	=>	atswíki	"cough"	
ńcú'té	"to meet"	=>	acu'te	"meeting"	
ńzēŋ	"to dance"	=>	azēŋ	"dance, sp."	
ńzēŋ	"to dance"	=>	lezēŋ	"dance, gen."	CLASS 5
mbá'	"to braid"	=>	lepā'	"braided head pad"	
mbé	"to forbid"	=>	lepé	"law"	
mbíá	"to go crazy"	=>	lepia	"craziness"	
ńkák	"to rejoice"	=>	lekāk	"joy"	
ńzēŋ	"to twist"	=>	lezeŋ	"hernia"	
ńcūŋ	"to knot"	=>	lecūŋ	"knot"	
ńkā	"to swear"	=>	eka	"covenant"	CLASS 3
ńtē	"to heal"	=>	ete	"strength"	
ńték	"to advise"	=>	ntekní	"advice"	
éfā'	"to search"	=>	efa'	"research"	
ésá	"to break"	=>	esā	"slice"	
éfā	"to err"	=>	mefa	"error"	CLASS 6
ńcūp	"to contribute"	=>	ncup	"contribution"	CLASS 9

The assignment of tone on the derived form is quite regular but there are some unexplained exceptions. Usually a high tone verb such as ńkó' "to climb up" will nominalize with either a mid (lowered high) tone on the root, ekō' "ladder" or a high tone on the root, lekó' "hill". The reason for the choice of one or the other is obscure. Nor is it at all common for the same verb to give both patterns in the nominalised forms.

Given a low tone verb such as mbí' "to carry", the nominalised form will have a low tone on the root, apí' "burden".

The exceptions to these assignments of tone according to the tone of the verb root are relatively few:

(26) Exceptions to Tone Assignment

éshúǹní	"to converse"	=>	ashuǹne	"conversation"
ńjhé	"to eat"	=>	ajhu	"stomach"
ńcú'tí	"to meet"	=>	acu'te	"meeting"
ńzī	"to begin"	=>	nzí	"beginning"
ńzōkó	"to finish"	=>	lezokó	"place of finishing"

The appearance of an added echo vowel on some of the nominalisations is also unexpected and has no current explanation. COMRIE states (1985:357) that "Languages typically show rather low predictability with respect to their noun formation process." So the irregular is not to be unexpected.

Certain nouns do not conform to the usual shape of nouns, i.e., having a prefix indicating noun class and a monosyllabic root. Instead they show some form of reduplication. At one time these may have represented productive processes but they no longer seem to be.

the first type of reduplication is characterized by having aspiration in the second but not the first syllable. Neither syllable represents an independent lexical item.

(27) Reduplication with Aspiration

shéshhéhé	"local eggplant"
ajújhé	"edible fruit of lantern plant"
swíswéhé	"edible local leaf"
njənjhə	"sheep"
nzenzhə	"housefly"
ngwíngwhí	"local bitter seasoning"

Each of the above lexical items represents either an animal or food item, each one being very distinctive and perhaps not known by everyone.

There are other cases of reduplication which are not characterized by the presence of aspiration in the second syllable. It is not known if this is still a productive process or not.

(28) Straightforward Reduplication

mbimbím	"cockroach"
lepipi'í	"wasp"
meta' gánaganá	"snail" "spider's web"
pepele pele	"lizard, sp."
aswiswí	"hemorrhage"
ntenté	"health"
ndúute lúute	"sweet drink"
mbuŋ mbuŋ	"albino person"
ŋkum ŋkúm	"manioc cous-cous"

5.0

PRONOUNS

5.1 Personal and Impersonal Pronouns

Yémba distinguishes three sets of personal or impersonal pronouns: those which are used in subject position, those in the position of direct object and those in other positions (i.e. object of preposition, logophoric, and focus.) The repertoire includes simple and complex (referring to more than one person) "plural" pronouns and separate complex "dual/quasi-dual" forms. Similar to Ngyemboon, a neighboring language, some would not consider the duals to be true duals "in that they do not signify dual numerality within a single 'person', but always signal duality by combining 2 separate singular persons into a single complex pronoun." (Animate and Inanimate Pronominal Systems in Ngyemboon-Bamiléké 1985: p. 3)

5.1.1 Subject: both simple and complex

(1) Simple and Complex Subject Personal Pronouns:

elements	Singular (both elements sing.)	Plural (both pl./one elem. pl.)
Person (+Focus)	Quasi-duals (-Focus)	
1 mèn	mèn/N	pèk
1+2	pòkò	mpè
2 wù	ò	pè
2+3	péyī	píàpóp
3 yí	à	pó
1+3	pèkyí	pékè pòóp
3+4	póyí	pópòpòóp

In this chart the complex plural forms indicate that at least one of the persons is represented by more than one individual. Thus the plural 2+3 pronoun can indicate 3 semantic possibilities: 2sing + 3pl, 2pl + 3sing, or 2pl + 3pl. The 4th person is always in combination with the 3rd person and could be classified as simply another 3rd person.

(2) Complex Dual Subject Pronoun Derivation

- 1 + 2-----> pèk + ò -----> pòkò
- 2 + 3-----> pè + yí-----> péyī
- 1 + 3-----> pèk + yí-----> pèkyī
- 3 + 4-----> pó + yí-----> póyí



The "complex" pronouns are easily derived. All the complex pronouns refer to 2 separate "persons." The plurality of the combination is marked on the first of the 2 pronouns, even though that specific person is only present in the singular.

(3) Complex Plural Subject Pronoun Derivation:

1 + 2-----> (pîmpê)-----> ñpê

2 + 3-----> pê + pɔp-----> pê + à + pɔp-----> píàpɔp

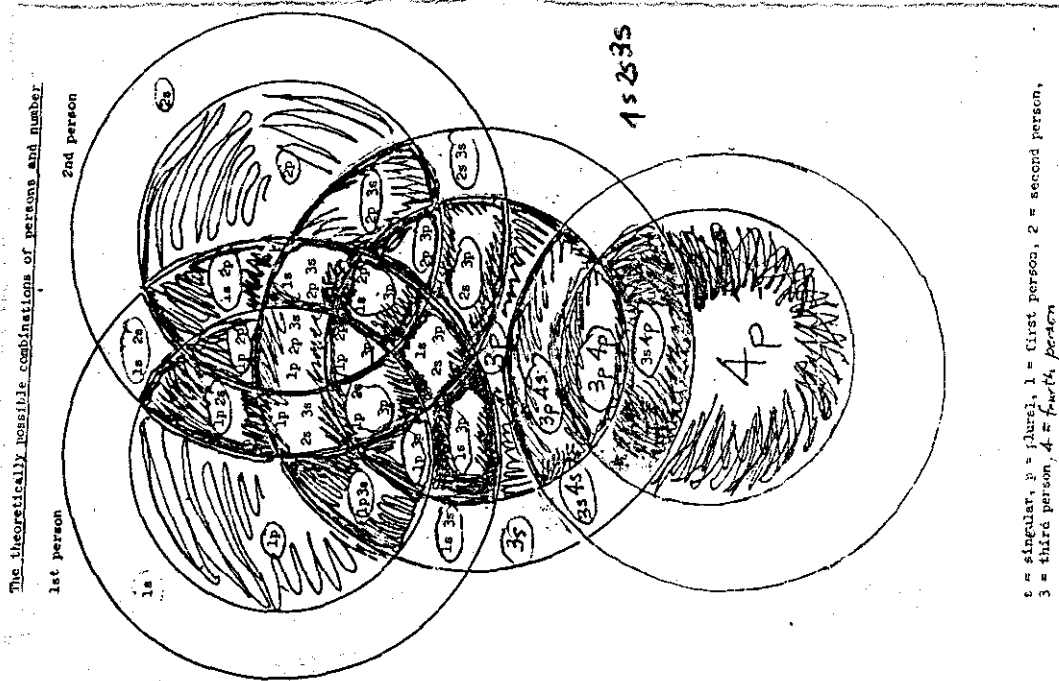
1 + 3-----> pèk + à + pɔp-----> pékàpɔp

3 + 4-----> pɔp + à + pɔp-----> pɔpàpɔp

Just as the plurality of dual combinations is indicated by pluralizing the first of the 2 forms, the plurality of complex plural subjects is also marked on the first pronoun of the set.

The complex plural subjects additionally mark the plurality of one/both of the person groups on the 2nd pronoun of the set. It is to be noted that the derivation of the 1+2 combination is more opaque than the others. All the plural forms whether quasi-dual or plural begin with the consonant p. This p is the concord consonant for N-class 2 nouns which is the class that contains most plural personal nouns. This concord p appears to be a remnant of an earlier stage of development where the pronoun root was preceded by the full noun class 2 prefix. Therefore I have posited that the 1+2 combination is derived from the form which is now the form used in other places than the subject or as a +Focus in the subject slot.

The Venn diagram below, developed by Robert Hedinger, shows all but a few of the possible combinations of persons and number. "The 3 sets of 2 concentric circles each represent one 'person'. The larger circle stands for the category singular, the inner circle for plural. Each intersection of circle on circle represents a combination of 2 or more categories."



(4)

The inventory of impersonal subject pronouns indicates that these pronouns refer back to the noun class of their singular or plural referents by combining a concord vowel with its concord tone (see ---). There is also a subject concord element following the subject, whether it be personal or impersonal, which one could call a representation of the subject in the verb phrase, as well as a concord element signalling representation of the direct or indirect object also in the verb phrase.

(5) Personal and Impersonal Subject Markers:

Class (Personal)	Subject Pronoun	Subject Concord Element
1	à	à
2	pó	é
(Impersonal)		
3	é	é
5	é	é
6	é	é
7	á	á
8	é	é
9	è	è

#### 5.1.2 Object of verbs: simple and complex

We have not found any distinction between the forms of direct and indirect object pronouns.

The 3rd person singular object pronoun is invariable, but it seems it can be often omitted for pragmatic reasons. We don't know what the criteria for such an omission is: it may be impersonal nouns are less likely to require it. Or it may be that having more than one complement requires it.

(6) Objects of Verbs: Simple and Complex

Person	Singular	Plural
1	ga	wek
1 & 2	wukɔ	yimpe
2	wu	wɛ
2 & 3	wɛyi	wia pɔp
3	yí	wɔp
3 & 1	wekyi	yimpe piapɔp

The element representing concord for the object (direct/indirect) carries a polar tone from the 'normal' concord tone of that particular noun class (with the exception of class 9 where the tone is that of the concord tone).

5.1.3 Others: Objects of prepositions; Focus and Emphatic (Disjunctive Set)

There seems to be another set of pronouns which could be called objects of prepositions. These correspond to the set of subject pronouns (with the exception of the 2nd and 3rd persons singular and 3rd person plural, as well as the complex pronouns (1st and 2nd combo).

(7) Objects of Prepositions

Person	Singular	Plural
1	á mbu men (prep.)	á mbu pek (prep.)
1 & 2	" " pɔkɔ	" " pimpe
2	" " wu	" " pe
2 & 3	" " pɛyi (?)	" " piapɔp
3	" " yí	" " pɔp
3 & 1	" " pekyi (?)	" " pimpe pɔp

The same set of pronouns can be used for emphasis. An example of an emphatic function might be the following:

(8) ŋin yí lɛŋwɛt a tswí' ézii  
 person PRN himself PRN lift his own part  
 FOC S

"Each one for himself should lift his own burden."

In this example the direct object pronoun yí co-occurs with lɛŋwɛt to express the

idea of a person doing something on his own for himself and without the aid of another.

#### 5.1.4 Logophoric pronouns

A logophoric pronoun is a pronoun which is coreferent with the subject of a preceding verb, distinguishing him/her from other 3rd person referents. Logophoric pronoun forms in Yémba are used in subordinate clauses dominated by a verb of speaking, thinking, feeling, hearing, or understanding.

The 3rd person singular logophoric pronoun in subject function is *yí*. Whether there are corresponding 1st and 2nd person forms is not yet clear. Notice that logophoric reference occurs across clause boundaries whereas in their emphatic function, these forms indicate coreference within the clause. The content of the object clause is introduced by *ńge*-- a complementizer which in certain environments gets raised to the status of a pro-verb (unmarked for tense/aspect.) A verb of speaking is frequently deleted before *ńge* (e.g. *ńdédé*).

Examples of the different pronoun forms used logophorically are given below.

#### (9) Subject (+LOGO)

<i>ńtshí</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>mékhū</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>ńge</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>gō</i>	<i>ekó'né</i>	<i>étshī</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>áthū</i>	<i>yí</i>
place	LOC	feet	him	COMPL	LOG		able	pick up	put	LOC	head
him											
		PREP	PRN								
PRN											
		PHR									

"he places it at his feet so that he can put it on his head."

#### (10) Subject (-LOGO)

<i>Mó's</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>mbu</i>	<i>ésó</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>ńge</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>efén</i>
S1						S2				S2	
father	my	P4	give	LOC	hands	friend	his	COMPL	he	CERT	F
keep											

"My father gave it to his friend telling him to keep it."

#### (11) Subject (+LOGO)

<i>Afú'te</i>	<i>zi</i>	<i>tshé</i>	<i>né</i>	<i>pā':</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>pím</i>	<i>álē'é</i>	<i>lā'</i>	<i>mét</i>
S1	POS-ADJ				LOG				
thoughts	his	remain	on	like this:	S1	brag	day		
promised	there								

"His thoughts dwelt on the idea that he would be exalted on that day."

## 5.2 Possessive Pronouns

### (12) Possessive Pronouns (according to Tadadjeu)

	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
	-a	-u	-i	-ek	-ε	-ɔp
C1	ée-ga	ée-wu	ée-yi	ée-wek	ée-wε	ée-wɔp
C2	ée-pá	ée-pú	ée-pí	ée-pék	ée-pé	ée-póp
C3	ée-gá	ée-wú	ée-yí	ée-wék	ée-wé	ée-wóp
C5	ée-tsá	ée-cú	ée-tsí	ée-tsék	ée-tsé	ée-tsóp
C6	ée-má	ée-mú	ée-mí	ée-mék	ée-mé	ée-tsóp
C7	áa-zá	áa-jú	áa-zí	áa-zék	áa-zé	áa-zóp
C8	see C5					
C9	ée-za	ée-ju	ée-zi	ée-zek	ée-zε	ée-zɔp

The possessive pronouns vary according to the class of the noun to which they are making reference, as in the following example:

- (13) Esó ga, poko tswi' áazá ŋgyá gá  
 friend my dual lift up my own to give me  
 PRN POSS PRN O  
 "My friend, let us two together lift up my part (onto my head.)"

Aazá refers back to the class 7 noun *atuo* "calabash", which appears earlier on in the text.

In the 3rd person the example is the following:

- (14) ŋiŋ yí lenwét a tswí' áazí  
 each himself S PRN lift up his own  
 POSS PRN  
 "Each person has to lift it up on his own."

## 5.3 Demonstrative pronouns

### 5.4 Relative pronouns

Relative pronouns introducing relative clauses as listed by TADADJEU are as follows:

- (15) Class 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9  
 -i yi-i pi-i yi-i tsi-i mi-i zi-i tsi-i zi-i

I will now proceed to list types of relative pronouns we have found in texts along with the environment in which they were found. One should note that we have included prefixes on some of the relative pronouns, whereas Tadadjeu has not. These prefixes are still to be verified:

(16) Class 1

O zét ŋkyōkó éyi o go tswīi' epa mo'ó  
 wu  
 you always be.small REL you be.able take bags father  
 your

PRN

"You are still too immature for you to be able to take the bags of your father."

Class 2

te ŋkó épo pímpɛ épi pɔp ápɛ la  
 until affect children POSS who they outside DISC  
 MKR

PRN REL PRN

"...including our children who are not here now with us."

Class 6

menu mboŋ mmi mpe epu nju' ayi 'a  
 words good which we all hear today in this way

REL PRN

"...the good words which we are all hearing today."

Class 7

Shúnó álē'é zi men e-shu'e yáá épa mo'ó wu á  
 mbū wu.  
 Tell day which I IRR-come give bags father your LOC  
 hands you

REL PRN

PREP O

"Tell me the day when I might come and give you your father's bags."

Class 8

mpe esán éfu' tsi ndémɛ a lé ya yímpe  
 we count surprises which God S PRN P4 give us

REL

"Let us count the blessings which God has given us."

Class 9

...awɔ le ju' ntekni ézī mpe eshun la  
 whoever NEG understand advice which we speak DISC MKR

REL PRN

"...whoever does not understand the advice which we speak..."

## 5.5

### Interrogative pronouns

There are basically 3 interrogatives: *awó* 'who', *akó* 'what', and *ego* 'where', as seen in the following examples:

- (17) *Awó á pféle?*      *A á pféle akó?*      *A á pfet ego?*  
 "Who has eaten?"    "What has he eaten?"    "Where has he eaten?"

## 5.6

### Indefinite pronouns

*Awíe wíe* "each one" In this category we'll begin with a personal indefinite pronoun "each one", which is attested to exist in a benefactive slot.

- (18) ...*ńgɔ*      *ntsa*      *mezɛɛ*      *awíe wíe*  
 SSbe      be merciful    sufferings    each person  
 "He is merciful toward the sins of each person."

It, like the French "chacun", has both a collective and distributive meaning.

*Awó* "whoever" This one exists in a subject slot and takes the form of the interrogative personal pronouns (see ---). It may be functioning here as the head of a relative class, as in the following example:

- (19) ...*awɔ*      *le*      *ju'*      *ntekni...*  
 whoever      NEG    understand    advice  
 INDEF PRN  
 "Whoever does not understand this advice..."

*Akó* "whatever" This one can exist in a direct object slot, taking the form of the interrogative impersonal pronoun:

- (20) ...*akó*      *mé*      *wíe*      *a wú*      *é;*      *akó*      *mé*      *nɔŋ*      *mpfet*      *a*  
*wú*      *lé*  
 whatever    one      have    LOC here    DISC    whatever    one    PRO    eat  
 LOC here  
 INDEF PRN  
 "...whatever one feels bad about."

*akó* can also appear accompanied by a relative pronoun to introduce a relative clause:

- (21) ...*akó*      *ezi*      *a*      *tsia*      *yímpe*  
 whatever    that      S PRN      goes beyond    our  
 INDEF PRN REL PRN  
 "...whatever it is that goes beyond our understanding."

It may give rise to the derivation *ākū akhūē*, a reduplication of *akó* with possible added aspiration on the last syllable as seen in 4.1.2. Here, addition of the final vowel may bring about the following phonological process: *ɔ* → *ɛ/* Syll1 + Syll2 (Syll=Cɔ). The *ɛ* is determined by a rule of vowel harmony (see echo vowels). Like *akó*, it can occur accompanying a relative pronoun. This in fact may be its only context.

(22)	...ŋgɛ	ākɛɛ	akhūé	ázi	á	ńtɔŋ	yi
	COMPL	whatever		that	LOC	neck	his
		INDEF PRN		REL PRN		?	?

**ntsem** "all" indefinite pronoun which marks totality. Examples taken from Tadadjeu below show that the order is the following: Noun + Indef. Pronoun of Totality.

The form is unmarked for number except for class 2 nouns where the prefix is /me-/, suggesting that the present form may be derived from a noun belonging to gender 1/2, and that the singular form in all other classes than 2 has replaced the plural form. Used in the singular /-tsem/ marks totality, when used with a plural noun it means "everyone" or "all of them".

(23)	CLASS 1	tó	ntsem	"the whole stone"
	2	mege	metsem	"all the foreigners"
	3	ŋka'	ntsem	"the whole field"
	5	lesɔŋ	ntsem	"the whole tooth"
	6	mesɔŋ	ntsem	"all the teeth"
	7	apa	ntsem	"the whole bag"
	8	epa	ntsem	"all the bags"
	9	nza	ntsem	"the whole axe"

In the following example where there is reduplication of the form, it seems to be redundant in that it is filling the same semantic role as **mbú**. Tadadjeu mentions that this reduplicated form may also appear preceding the noun to be modified.

(24)	...mbú	ńdɔk	átā	ńte	wú	ńtsem	ntsem
	completely	INSTR	round	fruit	conscience	your	all
	"...with all your faith."						

## 6.0 NOUN MODIFIERS

Noun modifiers exhibit varying forms of noun class agreement with the head noun. Some, such as the possessive and demonstrative modifiers, must agree in number with the head noun (i.e., its noun class). Others, such as some adjectives, are in an associative construction where the modifier is the grammatical head noun and as such precedes the semantic head noun.

### 6.1 Indefinite Modifiers

The noun class markers serve the function of determining or marking the presence of a noun. Without an overt modifier, the noun with its noun class markers implies an indefinite referent. There is an overt indefinite marker available, **m!mɔ'**. In its pre-head location (associative noun construction or not?), it indicates indefiniteness:



(1) a cu' m!mó' éfu'  
it stay INDEF time  
"until another (more indefinite) time"

(2) n- nɔ m!mó' mé-shuo  
c3-group INDEF c6-elephant  
"a group of (some) elephants"

The use of m!mó' as an INDEF often introduces participants for the first time in a narrative and often occurs within the first sentence or two of a story.

(3) m!mó' é- puɔ  
INDEF c2-person  
"some people"

(4) m!mó' nín  
INDEF person  
"a person"

Another use of m!mó' is to indicate an indefinite amount of something:

(5) mmo' !ñ-káp  
INDEF c9-money  
"some money"

In its post-head location, this indefinite modifier indicates definiteness. Whether or not it can be combined with other modifiers when in this post-head location needs to be studied. When in this position it is considered as an adjective because of the position and lack of obligatory agreement with the head noun.

(6) a cu' efu' mmo'  
it stay time DEF  
"until next time"

## 6.2 Possessive Modifiers

The form of the possessive modifiers (called "possessifs simples" by TADADJEU 1980:81) is similar to that of the possessive pronouns (or "possessifs référentiels"). Again the agreement between the modifier and the head noun reflects the noun class of the head noun (thereby indicating whether it is singular or plural) and the number and person of the possessor. The following chart is taken from TADADJEU 1980:179.



(9) Demonstrative Modifiers

	NS	NH	FAR
class 1	wūɔ	wō	yi
2	pūɔ	pwō	pi
3	wuɔ	wō	yi
5	cūɔ	cō	tsi
6	mūɔ	mwō	mi
7	jūɔ	jō	zi
8	cūɔ	cō	tsi
9	jūɔ	jō	zi

The corresponding demonstrative pronouns have an added high tone prefix é- for all classes except class 7 which has instead á-: éwuɔ, éwō, and éyi, for example for class 1 agreement.

The demonstrative adjectives are deictic, indicating a specific referent for a noun by locating it spatially in the real world or in the world of discourse. In the case of the former, there is a three-way distinction of "near speaker", "near hearer", and "far". In the world of discourse, the "near hearer" form is used to mean either "the one about which we have already spoken" or "the one already introduced". It is used in tagging participants already presented in the story, so you know that another new participant is not being referred to. It provides continuity of reference and applies not only to animate beings but also to important props in a story.

(10) e- só      y- i      w- ō  
c1-friend c1-3sPOS c1-NH  
*"that friend of his"*

(11) a- pa w- ō      =      a- pa á mēt  
c7-bag c1-NH      c7-bag AV DEM  
*"that bag"      "that bag"*

The example above that shows a class 7 noun *apa* modified by a demonstrative with class 1 concord markers raises the possibility that an important prop, such as the bag in this particular story, may be assigned class 1 concord markers as though it were in class 1, where many animate beings are found. This use of the demonstrative to refer to the already-known bag can be replaced by an invariable demonstrative *mēt* with no seeming change in meaning.

When the demonstrative modifier precedes the noun it modifies, the result has a negative connotation implying distrust or uncertainty:

- (12) w- uɔ ŋ- ge  
 c1-NS c1-stranger  
 "this (unknown) stranger"

#### 6.4 Quantifiers

Quantifiers form a closed class consisting of *-tsem* "all", *-shó'ó* "how many", and the numerals. There is limited agreement with the head noun. Semantically speaking, "how many" can refer only to the plural classes, so the possible number of forms is reduced to three, corresponding to classes 2, 6, and 8. On the other hand, "all" is invariable except when used with class 2 where it takes the noun class prefix *me-*, as in *mege metsem* "all the strangers".

With the numerals, class agreement determines the form for numbers one through five but the rest of the numbers are invariable. The following chart is taken from TADADJEU 1980:173.

#### (13) Quantifiers

	how many	one	two	three	four	five
class 1		wóo-mo'ó				
2	mé-shó'ó		mém-!píá	mé-tét	le-kuà	mé-t
3		wó-!mó'ó				
5		lé-!mó'ó				
6	mé-shó'ó		m-!bíá	n-tét	le-kuà	n-t
			mém-!bíá	méh-tét	mé-lékuà	méh-t
7		zé-!mó'ó				
8	tsé-shó'ó		!píá	tét	le-kuà	t
			tsé-!píá	tsé-tét	tsé-lékuà	tsé-t
9		zée-!mo'ó				

For the numbers two through five in classes 6 and 8, there are two variants possible.

#### 6.4.1 Numerals

When counting objects, the normal order within the NP seems to be the following:

- (14) prefix-Size + prefix-HeadNoun + Shape determiner +  
 prefix-Numeral  
 (Adj) (N / V redup.)

me-míá	mé-tó	ńzemne zemné	mé-tét
C2-big	C2-stone	round round	C2-three

This order changes to the following when the first object is enumerated:

(15)	Numeral	+ Shape (Noun)	+ HeadNoun
	ta'	atá	metíta
	one	C7-round/oblong fruit	C6-potato
	HeadNoun	+ Shape	+ Numeral
	metíta	atá	píá
	C6-potatoes	C7-round/oblong fruit	C8-

It is interesting to note in the last two examples that the class marker of the numeral agrees with the gender of the Shape determiner (even though not agreeing with it in plurality), rather than with the Head Noun. The Shape determiner is itself a closed class of invariable nouns which do not appear outside of a counting NP. The noun Shape determiners we have found are the following:

atá "round, oblong object," i.e. mango, avocado, taro, etc.

ntsɔ' "long object," i.e. banana, plantain, etc.

There is also an open class of shape determiners derived from the reduplication of verbs, i.e.:

ńzemne zemné (ńzēm : "enrouler")

ńkεεńε kεεńé (ńkēt : "enrouler")

These also seem to be invariable in their lack of agreement with any of the other elements of the NP. However, when an adjective indicating size enters the phrase, it takes the concord markers of the Head Noun (with the exception of *ameŋaga* 'little').

The counting system uses a base ten. When counting in an abstract sense (without a one on one correspondence matching numbers to objects), the number one (*wɔɔmɔ'ɔ*) is quite distinct in form from the *ta'* mentioned in the example above. (An instance, however, has been found of its use following a noun: *mɔ wɔ mɔ'ɔ* 'only child'.)

Numbers above ten (with the exception of those describing multiples of ten, i.e. 20, 30, 40, etc.) are prefixed by *ntsɔp*, roughly translated as 'above ten'. Multiples of ten are marked by the plural prefix /m-/ taken from Class 2. Numbers above 20 are composed in the following order:

Num-Marker Digits "tens" Multiplier

ntsɔp píá me-gem tét = 32

10+ two PL-ten three

It is to be noted that the number in the ones place is established before that in the tens place. 100, like 10, may be multiplied by numbers between 2 and 9.

(16) Counting Abstractly

1	wóomó'ó	11	ntsop zémō'
2	mé!píá	12	ntsop píá
3	métét	13	ntsop tēt
4	lekua	14	ntsop lekua
5	métáa	15	ntsop táa
6	ntokó	16	ntsop ntokó
7	sa!mbíá	17	ntsop sa!mbíá
8	lefaá	18	ntsop lefaá
9	levu'ó	19	ntsop levu'ó
10	le!gém	20	me!gém!bíá
20	me!gém!bíá	25	ntsop táa me!gém!bíá
30	me!gém tét	35	ntsop táa me!gém tét
40	me!gém lékua	45	ntsop táa me!gém lékua
50	me!gém táa	55	ntsop táa me!gém táa
60	me!gém ntokó	65	ntsop táa me!gém ntokó
70	me!gém sa!mbíá	75	ntsop táa me!gém sa!mbíá
80	me!gém lefaá	85	ntsop táa me!gém lefaá
90	me!gém levu'ó	95	ntsop táa me!gém levu'ó

100 nkhu

The only cardinals we can attest to are the following:

mvhō	"in front"	--> "first"
ñzém	"behind"	--> "second + following"
m!báátí + Numeral	"the following"	

.5 Adjectives

Adjectives are those modifiers which assign certain qualities or attributes to the head nouns. If they do agree with the head noun, it is a rather reduced system of agreement which operates. Their position after the head noun and reduced agreement with the head are the formal criteria for determining the class of adjectives. As a closed class, adjectives are limited to the following words: e!sw hí "new", tepɔŋ "bad", m!mó' "INDEF", mbɔŋ "good, pretty", nzwɪŋ "old".

The varying degrees of agreement exhibited by these adjectives possibly shows the varying degrees of derivation from either nouns or verbs.

(17) Adjectives and Other Modifiers

MODIFIER	N+MOD	CONCORD (SG/PL)	CONCORD (CLASS)	MOD+N	CONCORD (CLASS)
new	+	OPT	-	-	-
bad	+	-	-	-	-
certain	+	-	-	+	C7, C8
good	+	OPT	-	+	SG(C1)/PL(C6)
old	+	OPT	-	+	SG(C1)/PL(C6)
big	-	-	-	+	SG(C1)/PL(C2)
how many	+	+	+	-	-
all	+	+	-	-	-
POSS	+	+	+	-*	-
DEM	+	+	+	-*	-
NUM	+**	+	+***	-	-

\*except to indicate a kind of focus

\*\*except for "one"

\*\*\*only for "two", "three", "four", "five"

From this chart we see that there are the possibilities of no concord, reduced concord (to indicate whether singular or plural) or full concord. All these modifiers can occur in a post-head position, except for "big" *mía* which can occur only in a pre-head position. We have called the first six modifiers adjectives because of the reduced agreement they exhibit. What is interesting to note is that four of these adjectives can occur in a MOD-N construction also. In this position, the modifier becomes a head noun in the associative noun construction, and as such is the element which determines agreement.

This associative noun construction is used for another subset of adjective-type modifiers, colors. The grammatical treatment of "red", "black", and "white" as head nouns of class 1 (singular) and class 2 (plural) requires agreement governed by the head noun. This agreement is manifested in the choice of associative concord vowel and when demonstrative and possessive modifiers are used.

6.6 Other

There is one other kind of modifier that we have not yet talked about. It could be classed with the adjectives because it describes qualities of the head noun. On the other hand, this other kind of modifier seems to be an open class limited only by the semantics and collocational requirements of the verb from which it is derived. For lack of a better term we will call this other class of modifier "participial adjectives".

The verbs which have already proved capable of producing participial adjectives include verbs indicating changes of state have happened: grow, die, dry out, pound, grind, be ripe, pierce.

As with some of the other qualifying adjectives, some of these participial adjectives can be found either in the pre-head (MOD-N) or the post-head (N-MOD) position. Those which function this way include derivations from *ńzó* "to be dry",

ñkwhú "to die", mb!án "to be ripe", ñ!zó'ó "to pierce". The change in position does not seem to produce a change in meaning.

- (18) a- thú a- !zóo = a- zó á á-!thú  
 c7-tree c7-dried out c7-dried out AV c7-tree  
 "dried out tree"
- a- thú a- kwhú = a- kwhú á á- th!ú  
 c7-tree c7-dead c7-dead AV c7-tree  
 "dead tree"
- ñ- kengine m- !bán = a- pan á ñ- kengine  
 c?-banana c?-ripe c7-ripe AV c?-banana  
 "ripe banana"

Those derivations which have been found occurring only in the post-head adjective position are the following: promised, ripe (corn), grown, pounded, and ground. The obligatory agreement of these participial adjectives with the head noun requires a new grouping of the noun classes, with a major distinction being made between classes 1 and 9 as the animate classes, and the others as the inanimate classes. The prefixes on the adjectives show the necessary agreement according to the type of construction, whether an adjectival or an associative one.

(19) Agreement of Participial Adjectives

	N-MOD	PREFIX	MOD-N	PREFIX
class 1,9	+	N-	?*	?
6 (mass)	+	N-	+	a-
6 (plural)	+	me-	?	?
3,7	+	a-	+	a-
2	?	?	?	?
8	?	?	+	a-

\*no data for these at present

The form of these participial adjectives includes not only a prefix to indicate agreement with one of the three noun class groupings, but also a low tone vowel added onto the verb root. First the high tone verbs:



- (20) le'tswíí ==> me-títa n- tswíí  
 "to grow" c1-potatoes c1-grown  
 "grown potatoes"
- ==> me-ko me-tswíí  
 c6-beans c6-grown  
 "grown beans"
- ==> a- nɛno a- tswíí  
 c7-mosquito c7-grown  
 "grown mosquito"

When the high tone verb root ends in a vowel i, o or ɛ, that vowel is prolonged with a low falling tone. When the root ends in a consonant, the vowel e is the vowel added: éfók "be ripe (corn)" becomes efóke, as in ngesán efóke "ripe corn".

With the low tone verbs, there is the possibility of not only having the low tone vowel added, but also a prolongation of the low tone on the root. It is worth noting that the second nasal at the end of a word is a syllabic tone-bearing nasal which replaces the -e. An example of this is nkengine m!bánn "ripe banana".

The other questionable modifier to be left in residue occurs post-head and has a form similar to the interrogative pronoun, but its meaning is similar to the demonstratives. It is used to make oblique reference to something already talked to which you no longer want to make a direct overt reference. An example follows:

- (21) a cɛ' á -le'e z- ié  
 it stay c7-day c7-DEM  
 "until that (already mentioned) day"

Maybe this is another example of a modifier in pre-head position indicating indefiniteness ("which") and in post-head position indicating definiteness ("the which"), as we have already seen with m!mó'.

## 7.0 NOUN PHRASE

The noun phrase in Yémba can be divided into two types, the basic noun phrase and the secondary noun phrase. The basic noun phrase consists of elements which never occur in isolation, such as the class prefix and those discontinuous elements of concord which of necessity accompany other independent lexical and grammatical items. These elements of concord are governed by the noun class and have already been explored in Section 4 Nouns and Section 5 Pronouns. In Yémba the basic noun phrase includes the obligatory concord marker (one of two vowels) which resumes the class of the head noun in a secondary noun phrase before continuing on to the verb phrase. In Section 4.1 Noun Classes this was touched on briefly and the concord element was identified as subject concord.

The secondary noun phrase, on the other hand, combines different independent lexical and grammatical items. There is a fixed word order and different types according to the elements present. These possibilities include adjectival noun phrases (see Section 6), associative noun phrases (see 7.4), prepositional noun phrases (see 7.5), coordinate noun phrases (see 7.6), and relative noun phrases (see 5.6).

### 7.1 Order of constituents

The order of constituents discussed in Section 6 Noun Modifiers can be presented according to 10 different slots:

(1)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NUM	- INDEF	- c-NOUN	- AV	- c-Noun	- ADJ	- POSS	- NUM	- DEM	- QUANT
ta'	mmo'	(HEAD)			new				

Slots 1,2 and 6 appear to have only the indicated lexical items as possibilities in those particular slots.

### 7.2 Co-occurrence restrictions and degree of saturation

When both ta' and mmo' are used in a noun phrase, the demonstrative wō must occur also.

(2)

ta'	mmo'	efo	wō	ta'	mmo'	aketi	wō
one	INDEF	chief	DEM	one	INDEF	book	DEM
<i>"that other chief"</i>				<i>"that other book"</i>			

There are certain modifiers which can occur in the HEAD NOUN position and so provoke an associative noun construction with the necessary associative vowel (AV). These include modifiers of color and size and "old".

(3)

paŋ	-ŋ	tún
redness	AV	basket
<i>red basket</i>		

Usually modifiers do not accumulate beyond two or three within the same noun phrase. Two or three is common but more is very rare. It is not unusual for participants to be identified specifically with two or three determiners after they have already been introduced:

(4)

esó	yi	wō	esó	mō's	yi	wō
friend	his	DEM	friend	father	his	DEM
<i>"that friend of his"</i>			<i>"that friend of his father's"</i>			

### 7.3 Agreement within the noun phrase

Several elements within the noun phrase demonstrate concord with the noun class of the head noun. This concord occurs between the head noun and the possessive adjective, for example, and the other noun modifiers mentioned in Section 6.

There are also some lexical items which are invariable. One of these is ta' "one". Another, mmo' is also invariable except if the noun is of class 8, in which case the class prefix occurs before it: emmo'. Similarly, "all" is invariable unless the head noun is of class 2, in which case it takes the class prefix me-. The numerals 6 and following are invariable manifesting no agreement.

Some of the modifiers have optional limited agreement for number but otherwise

do not agree with the head noun. This is true of the adjectives "new", "old", and "good".

Full agreement with the head noun is characteristic of the possessive, demonstrative and interrogative adjectives. In addition, the numerals 2-5 also mark full agreement, as does the quantifier "how much".

#### 7.4 Associative noun phrase construction

The associative noun phrase construction has been variously called a genitive construction or a noun phrase with a determiner which is a noun. Most of the information in this section has come from TADADJEU (1980:174-178), HYMAN and TADADJEU (1976:\*\*\*\*), and PULLEYBLANK (1986:42-58). The construction allows a wide range of meanings in relation to how the two nouns of the construction are associated

The associative noun construction consists of a head noun followed by an associative marker and then another noun. Both nouns also have class prefixes proper to the noun class of the noun. In addition, the noun class of the head noun governs the choice of the associative marker.

##### (5) Associative Noun Phrase

c1-NOUN	AV	c1-NOUN
HEAD		DET

The choice of the associative marker involves either one of two vowels (a and e) and either one of two tones (high or low). This concord element depends on the noun class of the head noun as seen in the following table:

##### (6) Associative Markers

Class	Assoc. Marker
1	e
2	é
3	é
5	é
6	é
7	á
8	é
9	e

The vowel change rules that are needed in this construction are explained in TADADJEU (1980:175-76) and have been briefly summarised already in Section 4.1 Noun Classes. The tone change rules are a bit more complicated and have provided grist for the mill of linguists up until the present. The most recent attempt has been PULLEYBLANK (1986) and uses the data of HYMAN and TADADJEU (1976). The rules are too complicated even to make even a few generalisations due to all the possible variables that allow a total of 64 resulting combinations.

Part of the range of meaning possible from this construction is illustrated by the following examples:

(7) Associative Noun Phrase Meanings

/letɔŋ + é + efo/  
cl 5 AM cl 1                      PART-WHOLE  
navel of chief  
"chief's navel"

/nzā + e + efo/  
cl 9 AM cl 1                      POSSESSION  
axe of chief  
"chief's axe"

The question of whether a given construction is an associative noun phrase or a compound noun has not yet been carefully considered. Some possible tests to distinguish between the two would include the following considerations:

- (8)
- 1-if the plural is formed by indicating plural prefixes on both nouns, then it is likely that it is an associative noun phrase
  - 2-if there is something unusual about the tone pattern, that is, it cannot be explained by what is known about the tone patterns for the associative noun phrase, then it is likely that it is not an associative noun phrase but a compound noun
  - 3-if there is something unusual about the prefix or lack thereof on the second noun, then it is likely that it is not an associative noun phrase but a compound noun
  - 4-if the expansions possible in other noun phrases are also possible with this construction, then it is likely that it is an associative noun phrase.

7.5 Prepositional Phrases

In Yémba there are two types of prepositions, those which are simple and those which are composed. They form a closed class and are followed by a complement. This complement may be either a noun phrase or a pronoun. The order of elements in a prepositional phrase is as follows:

(9) Prepositional Phrase

PREP + N PHR

The simple prepositions have no known relation to any corresponding lexical items. There are 3 simple prepositions:

(10) Simple prepositions

á	"at"	LOC (locative)
mé	"towards"	DIR (directional)
pó	"with"	COOR (coord)

The composed prepositions consist of the simple preposition á "at" followed by an element related to a corresponding independent lexical item. This construction is distinguished from a simple possessive noun phrase such as mekhu mí "his feet" where the usual possessive adjective is used in agreement with the noun class of

"feet". The distinction lies in the use of the disjunctive pronoun (see 5.1.3) after the composed preposition: **ámékhu yi** "at the feet of him". The combination of the two elements can be seen in the following list:

(11) Composed Prepositions

ntē	"heart"	=>	ántē	"in, inside"
ndo	"upper surface"	=>	ándo	"on, on top of"
esī	"ground"	=>	á(e)sī	"at the bottom of, under"
mvho	"front part"	=>	ámvho	"in front of"
nzem	"back part"	=>	ánzem	"in back of, behind"
lezen	"side"	=>	álézen	"beside"
atsen	"lower part"	=>	á(a)tsen	"at the bottom of, under"
mekhu	"feet"	=>	ámékhu	"at the feet of"
athū	"head"	=>	á(a)thū	"at the head of"
mbū	"hands"	=>	ámū	"into the hands of"
legēn	"border part"	=>	álégēn	"next to"
athé	"tree"	=>	á(a)thé	"up"

The fact that "feet" and "hands" are the only plurals in this list can be explained by the fact that they are paired body parts, not simply plurals, and to indicate the location of one can be thought to include necessarily the other. Otherwise, the composed prepositions do not pluralise their noun element even when the noun that follows is plural. This is another indication that the composed prepositions are not simply noun phrases themselves. One does not say in Yémba, "at hearts of corn cribs" in order to indicate "inside corn cribs".

There is one other preposition which is composed but seems to have no current relation with a corresponding lexical item. The original source of the noun element of the composed preposition **áne** seems to have disappeared from the present-day language. Formally, **áne** "on, concerning", is a composed preposition and will be considered as such.

There is the possibility of other body parts (face, neck, back) being included in this inventory of composed prepositions, but it has not yet been studied.

Another question that has not yet been studied is whether the composed preposition enters into an associative (genitival) relationship with the noun phrase following. This does seem to be the case in Mundani (PARKER, 1989:172).

### 7.6 Coordinate Noun Phrase

There seem to be two coordinating prepositions in Yémba: **pó** and **ŋku**. The distinction between the two is not yet clear. In addition, the form of **pó** sometimes changes to **mbó** for presently unknown reasons. One possible distinction to investigate between **pó** and **ŋku** is whether it matters if the following noun or noun phrase makes reference to animate or inanimate objects. The data on hand indicates that **pó** might be used with either but that **ŋku** may be restricted to inanimate. Another question would be whether the distinction animate/inanimate follows noun class lines or not, since animates are found in both classes 1 and 9 and class 9 also includes inanimates.

(12) Coordinating prepositions

kénán      pó      tetsa  
chameleon COOR frog  
"chameleon and frog"

nzap      nku      metíta  
greens COOR potatoes  
"greens and potatoes"

8.0 VERB AND VERB PHRASE

8.1 Classes

There are two fundamental classes of verbs in Yémba based on the criterion of tone. Just as the whole tonal system of Yémba depends on the basic distinction between high tone and low tone, so the verb in Yémba can be divided into two tone classes. This gives us high tone verbs and low tone verbs. The distinctive tonal regularities each class exhibits are evident when looking at both the verbal and the nominalized infinitives, the imperatives, the derived adjectives, and throughout their conjugated forms. There may be an exception to their maintaining their respective tonal distinctions in a construction not yet investigated.

Although these two tone classes exhibit great regularity for the most part, maintaining their own distinctive tone patterns, there are some irregularities. These are most often noted in high tone verbs whose nominalized infinitive tone pattern more closely resembles that for low tone verbs. No other such irregularities have been discovered to date.

The tone class of a given verb is determined by the lexical tone on the verb root in the nominalized (dependent/complement?) infinitive, i.e., the verb form with the low tone class 5 noun prefix *lè-*. With this criterion we find many tone minimal pairs among the verbs, each verb being capable of assuming this noun class fix:

LOW TONE CLASS	HIGH TONE CLASS
<i>lè!à</i> 'weep'	<i>lè!!á</i> 'cook'
3 3-6	3 2

It should be noted that the low tone verb in this form has a falling tone before pause, but elsewhere it is realized as a level low. This is a neutralization of the opposition in the overall tone system between plain L and the L H sequence. Plain L tone is realized as a falling tone before pause but level elsewhere while the L H sequence is realized everywhere as a level low tone.

Inherent in this verbal form with *lè-* is a downstepping of the following high tone, thus giving us a downstepped high as the lexical tone on the verb root: *lè!!á* 'cook'.

These distinctive tone patterns are continued with the verbal (independent) infinitive, with the underlying lexical tones established on the basis of the dependent infinitive are a bit perturbed. The high tone verb easily maintains in this verb form the underlying lexical high tone: *ńdá* 'cook'. On the other hand,

what we have classed as a low tone verb is no longer characterized by its underlying lexical low tone: *ń!dá* 'weep'. This can be analyzed as a lexical low tone which has disassociated from the segment, allowing the unassociated high tone of this form to displace it and then be downstepped by it.

## 8.2 Tense

Tadadjeu in 1975 in an unpublished manuscript presented the possibility of an eleven tense system with clearly-cut boundaries denoting absolute time with the reference point being the present moment.

- (1) P5 *lelá*
- P4 *le*
- P3 *ke*
- P2 *á* N-root
- P1 *á*
- P0 *ā* root-V
- F1 *ā*
- F2 *ā* *pín*
- F3 *ā* *shu'*
- F4 *ā* *lu*
- F5 *á* *fú*

From our experience of trying to elicit these same examples, I would like to make the following observations: The present or P0 as described by Tadadjeu only exists within the environment of a conditional "if" clause which awaits completion by another phrase. When asking for the present in French with the present progressive, "Je suis en train de...", the speaker will give the progressive form of the nearest past tense (P1).

Men *á* *sī* *ń-zík-é*  
 I P1 PROG R  
 "I am yawning."

When eliciting the present without the progressive aspect, we usually are given either P1 or F1.

The table in Hyman's 1980 article on Relative Time Reference is a tentative reanalysis of Tadadjeu's ideas. He attempts to show the system to be one of relative rather than absolute time reference.

(2) definition	time reference	past tenses	future tenses
PROXIMATE	+/- very short time	P1: <i>á</i>	F1: <i>ā</i>
SAME DAY	+/- a few hours	P2: <i>áá</i>	F2: F1 + <i>pín</i>
ONE DAY AWAY	+/- a day	P3: <i>kè</i>	F3: F1 + <i>lù/shù'</i>
SOME DAYS AWAY	+/- 2 or more days	P4: <i>lè</i>	F4: F1 + <i>lá'</i>
LONG TIME AWAY	+/- a year or more	P5: P4 + <i>lá'</i>	F5: F1 + <i>fú</i>

Although P3 and F3 are most often used to characterize an action in the present moment, the time boundaries of P4 and F4 are much more subjective and may depend on the speaker's perception.

Comrie in Tense (p.86) suggests that the absolute time reference may be an implicature rather than part of the inherent meaning and that measurement of temporal distance from a floating reference point determined by the speaker's subjective viewpoint is a possibility for Yemba.

Consequent to work with Jim Roberts using ideas taken from Pulleyblank, we are positing a floating low tone as the essential mark of the future, and a floating high as the essential mark of the past.

Here are Roberts' tone analyses of the future according to our most recent data (Nov. 90) involving both high and low tone verbs: *ńzík* "to yawn" and *ńzĩk* "to scrape something off the ceiling."

- (3) F1
- |     |            |                               |               |
|-----|------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| men | e -zik - e |                               | Surface Tones |
|     |            | no tone                       | men ēzíké     |
| L   | HL or      | H -----> undergoes metathesis | men e!zike    |
|     |            | L -----> undergoes lowering   |               |
- 1ps
- F2
- |     |            |                             |                  |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| men | e -piŋ - ŋ | zik - e                     | Surface Tones    |
|     |            | no tone                     | men e!piŋ̄ zíké  |
| L   | HL L       | HL H -----> metathesis of L | men e!piŋŋ !zike |
|     |            | or                          |                  |
|     |            | L -----> lowering of H      |                  |
- F3
- |     |         |           |                  |
|-----|---------|-----------|------------------|
| men | e -shu' | ∅ zik - e | Surface Tones    |
|     |         | no tone   | men e!shu' zíké  |
| L   | HL L    | L H       | men e!shu' !zike |
|     | or      | or        |                  |
|     | HL      | HL L      |                  |
- F4
- |     |         |                          |                 |
|-----|---------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| men | e -lu u | zik - e                  | Surface Tones   |
|     |         | no tone                  | men e!luū zíké  |
| L   | HL L HL | H -----> metathesis of L | men e!luu !zike |
|     |         | or                       |                 |
|     |         | L -----> lowering of H   |                 |
- F5
- |     |       |                             |               |
|-----|-------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| men | e -fu | ∅ zik - e                   | Surface Tones |
|     |       | no tone                     | men ēfú zíké  |
| L   | HL H  | L H -----> no other changes | men ēfú zike  |
|     |       | or                          |               |
|     |       | L -----> deletion of 2nd L  |               |



(4)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
[SAME DAY]	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
[NEAR]	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
[ANTERIOR]	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
[FAR]	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+

Our data concerning the past corresponds approximately with Hyman's chart but with the following changes in markers for the future (which may indicate simply a dialect difference between southern and central Bafou.)

(5)	southern/ central	northern (dialect where we are located)
F2	pīŋ	pīŋŋ
F3	ɪu	shà'
F4	lá'	ɪuū
F5	fú	fú

In discourse pīŋ (F2) may have other semantic functions than that of simply a "same day" future. There will be discussed in the section on Auxiliaries.

### 8.3 Mood

#### 8.3.1 Hortatory-Definiteness

Hyman cites a problem with the lá' as the F4 marker in the southern dialect. According to our data up to this point lá' appears with a future implicature in hortatory phrases, for example:

O lá' n-jyó, mben nɔŋ kó'ó, ó kɛɛ.  
 you HORT R see rain Simul. approach you run  
 PRO

"From now on whenever you see rain coming, you run."

Hyman says lá' can be factored out as a "separate parameter pervading the system", and that it can give a meaning of "definiteness". As seen in the example above, in my opinion the lá' may be introducing a hortatory mood parameter which indeed does have an implicature of "definiteness". It is interesting to note in the northern dialect at least ɪuū is the mark of F4 rather than lá'.

### 8.3.2 Realis/Irrealis

Hyman states that another feature is needed to complete the binary feature analysis as presented above to distinguish between future and past. I would like to suggest that that feature may be Steve Anderson's idea of REALIS versus IRREALIS mood.

#### Formal Implicational Statements

[+ real] ⇒ [-fut]

[- real] ⇒ [-past]

Steve Anderson in his dissertation *Tone and Morpheme Rules in Bamileké-Ngɛmbɔŋ* argues that the nasal prefix signals the "realis imperfective" meaning. This may be true also for Yɛmba. But then there is the possibility of the nasal prefix playing also the role of a consecutivization marker as a portmanteau.

### 8.3.3 Imperative

The form of the imperative is the following: the nasal syllabic prefix is removed from the infinitive to reveal the root which is either CV or CVC, and an additional vowel is added. Due to consonant alternation rules of Yɛmba, the initial consonants undergo the following changes: b,d,g--->p,l,r; gw--->w; gy--->y. Semi-vowels not preceded by g are prolonged to become full vowels in the imperative, for example: *ńdwēt*--->*lulē*. There seems to be dialectical variation within Bafou with generation being a variable in the following environment: *ńkyét*--->*kīlé* or *kyélé*. The additional vowel is determined by vowel harmony rules and gives the following configuration: CVV and CVCV. The vowel harmony rules are such that for instance the second vowel is undesignated for front or back and it conforms to the frontness or backness and height of the root vowel. However, when the syllable is closed, different rules in relation to the height of the root vowel are activated. Aspiration in the infinitive is retained in the imperative form. Final remark is that the second consonant in a CVC construction becomes flapped when it is t and that the voiceless stops p and k become voiced and fricative.

CV: *ńdí*----->*líí*      *ńbí*----->*píí*  
"to sleep"                      "to lose"

CVC: *ńgyēt*----->*yɛlɛ*      *ńkwɛ'*----->*kwɛ'ɛ*  
"to light"                      "to yell"

### 8.3.4 Epistemological mode (see Aspect below)

## 8.4 Aspect

### 8.4.1 Progressive

The two particles *ésí* and *ńńɔŋ* alone and in combination with each other seem to be markers of the progressive aspect. They require an imperfective vocalic suffix attached to the main verb, as well as either a high tone nasal prefix again on the main verb, to indicate REALIS mode (+ past) or a low tone prefix *ɛ-* marking IRREALIS. The exception to these requirements occurs at P1 for *ńńɔŋ* where the

nasal prefix is not present. This is highly suspicious and will be investigated further. As seen in the chart there is a co-occurrence requirement of the verb *ngō* "to be" when *sí* is present in P5 as well as F2-F5. Semantically it is difficult to factor out the function of co-occurrence of the *sí* and *nōŋ* together. As far as we can discern, the combination increases the degree of truth value of a statement or the speaker's evaluation of its reality. The co-occurrence of these two may be introducing a parameter called "epistemological mode" which describes the speaker's knowledge of the actuality of the event is evaluated with respect to the source whether it's based on hearsay or eyewitness report.

(6) Distribution of Progressive Markers in the Tense System

	<i>ésí</i>	<i>ñnōŋ</i>
P5	<i>ñ-gó é-sí N-V</i>	<i>nōŋ-ɔ N-V</i>
P4	<i>sí N-V</i>	" " " "
P3	" " "	" " " "
P2	*	<i>ñ-nōŋ</i> " "
P1	" " "	<i>0-nōŋ 0-V</i>
P0	*	*
F1	*	<i>nōŋ-ɔ è-V</i>
F2	<i>é-gó é-sí é-V</i>	" " " "
F3	" " " " " "	" " " "
F4	" " " " " "	" " " "
F5	" " " " " "	" " " "

8.5 Other Verbal Auxiliaries

*ñná* "a little" deriving possibly from verb *ñná'* "to lie in wait for".

men ke na' ñ-kāŋ ñna'  
 I P3 a little R fry sauce  
 "Yesterday I cooked the sauce a little."

*ñdá'* "already" deriving possibly from verb *ñdá'* "to spend the night".

men ke la' ñ-kāŋ ñna'  
 I P3 already R fry sauce  
 "I already cooked the sauce yesterday."

*mbú* "together, completely". Derivation unknown.

men ke pú ñ-kāŋ ñna'  
 I P3 completely R fry sauce

"Yesterday I cooked the sauce completely."

ñnáñ "always" deriving possibly from verb ñnáñ "to stay".

men ke nan ñ-kāñ ñna'  
I P3 always R fry sauce

"I spent a long time frying the sauce yesterday."(?)

ñzét "to have just done something" deriving possibly from verb  
ñzét "to remain".

men ke ze ñ-kāñ ñna'  
I P3 have just R fry sauce

"I just cooked the sauce (only) yesterday."

ñzén "again" deriving possibly from verb ñzén "to dance".

men ke zen ñ-kāñ ñna'  
I P3 again R fry sauce

"I cooked the sauce again yesterday."

ñbí' "with success" deriving possibly from verb ñbí' "to carry".

men ke pi' ñ-kāñ ñna'  
I P3 successfully R fry sauce

"I successfully cooked the sauce yesterday."

ñgé "previously". Derivation unknown.

men ke ge ñ-kāñ ñna'  
I P3 previously R fry sauce

"I previously cooked the sauce."

## 9.0 VERB MODIFIERS

There are two kinds of verb modifiers in Yémba that will be considered here: adverbs and prepositional phrases.

### 9.1 Adverbs

Adverbs form a closed class and can be divided into temporal and spatial adverbs. They always follow the verb phrase and any other modifying prepositional phrases.

#### (1) Adverbs

ezó	"yesterday, tomorrow"
ayá'a	"today"
nzemēnzem	"this morning"
ntswīnzem	"this evening"
etsetsoŋo	"now"
wú	"there (general)"
ge	"over there"
la	"from there (?)"

nden-nden	"straight ahead"	<= nden "bamboo stick"
léswhi leswhī	"again, over again"	<= éswihī "to be new"

## 9.2 Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases can be typified as temporal, manner, or locative modifiers.

### (2) Prepositional Phrases

á ngapa ayá'a	"next week"
á paate ezó	"the day after tomorrow/before yesterday"
á mmo' efu'	"later, another time (unspecified)"
á éfu' mmo'	"later, another time (more definite)"
á ále'é zíé	"another day (specific)"
mé nda	"softly, quietly, slowly, patiently"
mé hte	"forcefully, outloud, with strength"
mé ndu	"to the swamp"

### !b9.3 Order and Saturation

When there are two or more verb modifiers in a single sentence, their order is LOC followed by TEMP:

- (3) á kè !lókè ññí ñkyó' á!thú á ñ!ká' ézò.  
he P3 INSTR machete CM-chop tree LOC field TEMP-yesterday  
*Yesterday he cut a tree with a machete in the field.*
- (4) á kè zí!í á !élòk ññí ñkyó' á!thú á ñ!ká' é!zò.  
he P3 PHAS LOC c-INSTR machete CM-chop tree LOC field TEMP  
*Yesterday he started to chop a tree in the field with a machete.*

In the second sentence, the addition of a phasal auxiliary zí introduces the necessity of now introducing the INSTR construction with a preposition á "LOC", instead of placing it within the verb phrase (see 10.4). This prepositional phrase includes a nominalised verb !élòk which might be translated verbally as "using". As a prepositional phrase it qualifies as a verb modifier of instrument but it has an unusual placement within the verb phrase. The phasal auxiliary, as the first verb element after the tense marker in the verb phrase, takes the discontinuous mark of tense P3, the downstepped echo vowel: zí!í. The prepositional phrase is then inserted between the first verb element and the main (semantically speaking) verb ñkyó', which now has only the bare markings of a consecutive construction.

The placement of manner modifiers of verbs has not yet been studied.

## 10.0 VERB COMPLEMENTS

Verbs can be classified as to the types of complements they take.

### 10.1 No Complement

Those verbs which take no complement have been traditionally called intransitive. These exist in Yémba:

- (10) à kè !lókè òní òkyó' á!thú  
he P3 INSTR machete CM-chop tree  
*He cut a tree with a machete.*

#### 10.5 Complex Clauses

Full clauses can also appear as complements to the verb. The two clauses are joined by a complementiser.

- (11) a á le nge, a á shé'  
he P1 dire COMP he P1 venir  
*He said he is coming.*

The verbs which can be followed by such a complementiser are those of mental activities and communication activities.

- (5) |  
 a ke lííí  
 SJ P3 V  
 he slept

## 10.2 Direct Objects

Those verbs which do take a complement have been traditionally called transitive. Transitive verbs can take direct objects. In Yémba the direct object follows the verb and is preceded by an agreement marker which is realised most often as an echo vowel on the verb. The source of this echo vowel is the set of concord elements identified as object concord in 4.1. The agreement marker is governed by the class of the noun which is the object.

- (6) /a ke tón á            n-ge/            =>    [a ke tónó híge]  
 SJ P3 V    OJ CONC c1-stranger  
 he called the stranger

## 10.3 Indirect Objects

In Yémba the indirect objects are expressed by the use of prepositional phrases:

- (7) a ke yá ámbū yi  
 SJ P3 V    PREP IO  
 he gave (it) to him

When both an indirect and a direct object exist in the same sentence, the direct object precedes the indirect object:

- (8) a ke yá híkap ámbū yi  
 SJ P3 V    OJ    PREP IO  
 he gave the money to him

## 10.4 Other

This label makes reference especially to verb phrases such as are found in what has been variously called consecutive and serial constructions. They often serve the purpose of benefactive and instrumental modifiers.

- (9) meŋ á ju'            ngon, hígyá mē            ga  
 SJ P1 V            OJ            CM-V IO            POSS  
 I            cultivate field give mother my  
 I cultivated the field for my mother

This use of the verb "to give" does not require (allow?) the use of a preposition after it in order to introduce the indirect object. The benefactive construction follows what might be considered the main verb semantically.

The instrumental construction does not behave in the same way. Instead of coming after the main verb semantically speaking, it precedes it and as a consequence carries the verb markings for the whole verb phrase.

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