

REPETITION AND IRRITATION EMPHASIS IN BAFUT¹

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Demonstratives in Bafut not only indicate the distance of the referent from the speaker or hearer, but also distinguish between unmarked forms and those marked as particular, highlighted or contrastive. These four forms may be arranged pragmatically on a scale of emphasis, which tends to correspond to the number of repetitions the speaker has been obliged to make or the degree of irritation felt by the speaker. Thus, the marked form as 'particular' tends to be used in connection with a first repetition, the highlighting form with a second, and the contrastive form with a third.

Les démonstratifs en bafut non seulement indiquent la distance du référent au locuteur ou à l'interlocuteur, mais aussi ils distinguent entre formes non marquées et celles qui sont soit marquées comme spéciales, celles qui sont mises en exergue ou celles qui sont contrastives. Ces quatre formes de démonstratifs peuvent être arrangées de manière pragmatique sur une échelle d' emphase, qui tend à correspondre au nombre des répétitions que le locuteur a dû faire ou le degré d'irritation ressenti par le locuteur. Ainsi, la forme marquée comme « spéciale » tend à être utilisée en relation avec une seule répétition, celle mise en exergue par une seconde répétition, et la forme contrastive par une troisième répétition.

0. INTRODUCTION

Bafut is a Ngemba language which is spoken in the N.W. Region of Cameroon by a population of about 80,000 people. It falls within the larger family of Mbam-Nkam languages which form part of the Grassfields Bantu group.

A good number of studies have been carried out on the Bafut language. Some of the more extensive ones have been done by Crozier (1980), Ambe (1989), Tamanji (2009) and Mfonyam (1982, 1989).

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of demonstratives within the reference system of Bafut. It first describes how different forms not only indicate relative distance from the speaker and hearer, but also may be marked as particular, highlighting or contrastive. It then suggests that, in connection with repetition or irritation, the marked demonstratives may convey differing degrees of emphasis.

1. FORMS OF THE DEMONSTRATIVES

Demonstratives in Bafut reflect the typical three-way spatial distinction common to Grassfields Bantu languages: between referents that are near the speaker (N.S.), near the hearer (N.H.), and far from both the speaker and the hearer (F.S.H.) Each of these demonstratives also has additional forms which are marked as particular, highlighting or contrastive and which, under certain circumstances, convey up to three degrees of emphasis (where 'emphasis' reflects the strength of the speaker's feelings; see Callow,

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1974:52). For convenience, and in anticipation of section 3 of this paper, the default forms of the demonstrative are referred to as having emphatic degree zero (0), the particular forms as having emphatic degree one (1), the highlighting forms as having emphatic degree two (2), and the contrastive forms as having emphatic degree three (3).

Table (1) presents the full paradigm of the demonstratives which occur with various noun classes.²

Table 1

Noun Class	sample nouns	N.S.	N.H.	F.S.H.	emphatic degree
1	fórə 'mouse'	ghû	wā	wī	0
		ghúa	wāā	wī	1
		ghúlà	wālā	wīlì	2
		ghúàghû	wāāwā	wīwī	3
2	bīfōrə 'mice'	bû	byā	bī	0
		Búa	byāā	bû	1
		búlà	byālā	bīlì	2
		búàbû	byāābyā	bībī	3
3	mó'ó 'gun'	ghû	wā	wī	0
		ghúa	wāā	wī	1
		ghúlà	wālā	wīlì	2
		ghúàghû	wāāwā	wīwī	3
5	nīkwēē 'arm'	nû	nyā	nī	0
		núa	nyāā	nû	1
		núlà	nyālā	nālì	2
		núanû	nyāānyā	nīnī	3
6	mīkūū 'beans'	mû	myā	mī	0
		múa	myāā	mû	1
		múlà	myālā	mīlì	2
		múàmû	myāāmyā	mīmī	3
7	ātēē 'calabash'	yû	yā	yī	0
		yúa	yāā	yû	1
		yúlà	yālā	yīlì	2
		yúàyû	yāāyā	yīyī	3
8	īkīkúŋ 'owls'	jû	jyā	jī	0
		júa	jyāā	jû	1
		júlà	jyālā	jīlì	2
		júàjû	yāājyā	jījī	3
9	ŋgū 'fowl'	yû	yā	yī	0
		yúa	yāā	yû	1
		yúlà	nyālā	yīlì	2
		yúàyû	yāāyā	yīyī	3

² Noun class numbers correspond to those used in Mfonyam (1989).

10	m̃bī ‘goats’	jû	 jyā	jī	0
		Júà	 jyāā	jî	1
	ṅgò’ò ‘stones’	júlà	 jyālā	jìlì	2
		júàjú	 jyāājyā	jîjī	3
19	fit̃ā ‘wine calabash’	fû	 fyā	fī	0
		fúà	 fyāā	fî	1
	fikùù ‘small bed’	fúlà	 fyālā	fìlì	2
		fúàfû	 fyāāfyā	fîfī	3

The default demonstrative stem is made up of a concord consonant and a root. This can be represented as in (1):

(1) demonstrative stem ---> concord consonant + root

The root bears the tone, which can be either high-low or high-mid (which phonetically is actually high-downstepped high). The demonstrative roots are as follows:

Table 2

N.S.	N.H.	F.S.H.
-û	-ā	-ī

Table (3) presents the concord consonants of the demonstratives according to noun classes:

Table 3

noun class	concord consonant
1	gh-
2	b- (by-)
3	gh-
5	n- (ny-)
6	m- (my-)
7	y-
8	j- (jy-)
9	y-
10	j- (jy-)
19	f- (fy-)

The concord consonants are the consonants of the near-speaker demonstratives and interrogatives. These are also the general noun class concord consonants.

It will be noticed, from a comparison of the near-speaker and near-hearer forms, that **gh-** varies with **w-**, with **w-** occurring before **-a** and **-i**. The consonants **n-**, **m-**, **j-** and **f-** are palatalised before **-a**.

The following are the morphemes which are added to the default forms to yield the particular, highlighting and contrastive demonstratives:

Table 4

N.S.	N.H.	F.S.H.	marked as
-à	-ā	-ì	particular
-là	-lā	-lì	highlighting
-Cû	-Cā	-Cî	contrastive

The marked demonstrative forms given in Table (4) represent the elements that are common in all the noun classes. They are the last syllable of each of the marked demonstratives. The tones of these elements reflect the tones of the demonstrative roots. In the contrastive demonstrative, /-C/ represents the concord consonant.

Table 1 also illustrates that reduplication plays a significant role in the morphological structure of the different forms of the demonstratives. This is more clearly seen in the FSH forms. The general principle here is the reduplication (or copying) of elements of the demonstrative. For example, the difference between the default and particular FSH forms is signalled by the reduplication of the vowel /i/, whereas the difference between the highlighting and contrastive forms is indicated by the reduplication of morphemes. The contrastive form consists of a combination of the default and particular forms. For some speakers, the contrastive form (e.g., /nûnî/) varies with /nîlîlî/, which is simply a reduplication of the emphatic form.

2. NORMAL USAGE OF THE DEMONSTRATIVES

This section examines the semantics of the demonstratives, i.e., their normal usage. The inherent meanings of the demonstratives are illustrated in context. This enables the pragmatic effects associated with repetition (as described in section 3) to be recognised.

2.1 THE DEFAULT DEMONSTRATIVE: DEIXIS AND ANAPHORA

In discourse the default forms of the demonstratives can be used deictically and anaphorically. Our study of their usage will reveal various pragmatic shades of meaning. These forms used deictically denote referents that are spatially close to the speaker, close to the hearer, and close to neither (spatial deixis). The near-hearer form of the default demonstrative, /-ā/, in its anaphoric function³ (anaphora) can be used to mark definiteness.

Referentiality and the notions of 'definite' and 'indefinite' are well defined and treated by Givón (1978). He defines referentiality as involving 'the speaker's intent to 'refer to' or mean a nominal expression to 'exist' - within a particular universe of discourse.' On the other hand, where a nominal is non-referential, the speaker is concerned with its kind or genus, or with its characteristics. In discourse, referential nominals can be seen as either definite or indefinite, i.e., assumed by the speaker to be either known and thus identifiable to the hearer or not.

In Bafut, the near-hearer demonstrative /-ā/ serves as the definite article. There is thus no separate definite article per se in Bafut. There is also a corresponding absence of an indefinite article in the language.

³ Leroy (1977:125) also identifies one of the demonstratives in Mankon as anaphoric

- (2) a. **àkíkúŋ yā**
 b. **àkíkúŋ**

In the example above, (2a) may mean either ‘that owl’ (near hearer) or ‘the owl’ (previously mentioned), depending upon the context. The absence of the demonstrative, as in (2b), implies indefiniteness in this case and so the example can be translated in English as ‘an owl’. Thus, in the Bafut referential system, indefiniteness is unmarked (except in the case of unique referents as in (3) below where the known referent is unmarked).

Typically, in Bafut discourse, new participants are introduced without the demonstrative but are referred back to with /--**ā**/.⁴

Thus, the presence versus absence of the anaphoric demonstrative /--**ā**/ in the reference system of Bafut is much like the use of the markers (articles) of definiteness and indefiniteness in English and other Indo-European languages. This is captured by the following Table (5):

Table 5

	Bafut	English
introduction	/Ø/	indefinite
anaphora	N.H. (/ā /)	definite

Unlike English, Bafut does not use the anaphoric demonstrative for what Hawkins (1978) labels the ‘larger situational use’, examples in English being ‘the King’, ‘the President’, and ‘the sun’. In such situations, the referent forms part of the life or experience of both speaker and hearer; thus, it is common knowledge to both and so in English, but not Bafut, the definite article is used:

- (3) a. **Nīndò Ø á tá.**
 sun AN 3S shines
 The sun is shining.
 b. **Ò yā mfō Ø?**
 you see chief AN
 Have you seen the chief?

In the Bafut examples given in (3), no anaphoric demonstrative is used, even though the referents are specific and are commonly known to both speaker and hearer. This observation has also been made for Mankon (Anderson, ms).

The anaphoric use of the demonstrative /--**ā**/ is illustrated in the following passage:

- (4) a. **Mu wa à zī.**⁵
 child DEM0 3S come
 The child has come.
 b. **Là'à wa yīi mē bī'inē ghīrē ñyu'utē aà.**
 Surely DEM0 REL we IMPF wait AN
 The same one that we were waiting for.

⁴ See Mfonyam 1994 (p.202) for instances in which a known referent is named without any demonstrative being used because it is highlighted.

⁵ Texts taken from Bafut primers and recorded texts and stories are written following the orthographic rules of the language. The tones marked are the following L, Falling (HL glide) and rising (LH glide).

c. **À ni tsiĩ ma wa mə à zì m̂.**

FOC only PART DEM0 REL 3S come P0

It is the very same boy who has come.

In the above passage, the idea of identity with a previous referent is expressed by the use of the near-hearer demonstrative form and other particles. The demonstrative (together with the particles **ma**, **là'à**, **tsiĩ** and **yìi mə**) points to the fact that the speaker is referring to a specific child who has been previously mentioned or otherwise is identifiable.

2.2 THE PARTICULAR DEMONSTRATIVE

The demonstratives marked as particular, DEM1 (with emphatic degree 1) denote particular referents. This is illustrated in the following examples:

(5) **səŋ juà ñjoð!**

count DEM1 things

Count these (particular) things!

(6) **À l̂ m-bĩ wa ni yaà ñjwi mə à l̂ n-twi aà**

3S P3 SS-return PREP DEM1 day REL 3S P3 SS-set AN

He came back on the (particular) day that he had set.

The particular demonstratives can all be used as pronouns to mean 'this one/these ones' (N.S.), 'that one/those ones' (N.H.) and 'that one/those ones' (F.S.H.). For example, for noun class 5:

Table 6

N.S.	N.H.	F.S.H.
núà 'this one'	nyáā	nû 'that one'
múà 'these ones'	myáā	mû 'those ones'

2.3 THE HIGHLIGHTING DEMONSTRATIVE

The demonstratives marked as highlighting (DEM2) are used to stress the item concerned or to make it stand out. This is illustrated in the following passages, both of which are taken from folk stories in the second primer in the Bafut language (Mfonyam 1990:63, 68):

(7) a. **Sĩ l̂ n-tswe aa nĩ ànnũ ñkabə.**

we P3 SS-have AN with matter money

It was a monetary affair that we had.

b. **Ñkabə ya ỹ yûl̂ mə!**

money DEM0 3S DEM2 PART

HERE is the money.

(8) a. **Kwimâŋkò'ò, ò f̂ l̂?**

tortoise you where

Tortoise, where are you?

- b. **Yì mǎ'ɔ a bii a ɲgɛ̀ɛ, ɲ-swoŋ mə,**
 PX one 3S answer PREP grass SS-say that
 Another one answered in the grass, and said,
- c. **yû ghû, yû ghûlâ, m̀bɛɛ mə yu burə ka ki khǎ...**
 LOG DEM0 LOG DEM2 REL LOG still IMPF run
 I am here, I am RIGHT HERE! I am still running...

Example (7) is an abstract from ‘Tortoise and Pig’. In this story, Pig took Tortoise’s grinding stone and threw it away because Tortoise did not want to pay back the money he had loaned to him. Tortoise was offended, so he brought the money that he owed Pig, placed it on the ground and said, ‘HERE is the money! Give back my grinding stone and I will give back your money!’ The highlighting form of the demonstrative is used to stress that the money is ‘here.’

In (8), Tortoise and Deer are in a race. Deer is running as fast as he can. He runs for some distance believing that he has outrun Tortoise. To make sure that he is winning, he calls out to Tortoise, ‘Tortoise, where are you?’ One of the tortoises that Deer’s rival had hidden along the race track answers ahead of Deer, ‘I am here! I am RIGHT HERE, still in the race!’ The form of the demonstrative used here is again the one marked as highlighting. Tortoise is stressing that he is right here in front, still in the race and winning!

2.4 THE CONTRASTIVE DEMONSTRATIVE

The demonstratives marked as contrastive (DEM3) are used in situations in which the speaker wants to select from a number of items or options. He wants a specific thing where there are other possibilities and so he selects one. Use of this demonstrative is often accompanied by pointing. The contrastive demonstrative is illustrated in the following exchanges:

- (9) a. **O lǎɔ aa n-lǎɔ yuà m̀bi?**
 you want AN SS-take DEM1 goat
 Is it this goat you want to take?
- b. **Ŋgaŋ, mə lǎɔ aa yiiyii mə.**
 no, I want AN DEM3 PART
 No, it is that one that I want!
- (10) a. **Mə kǎŋə yuà àtsə'ə mə.**
 I like DEM1 dress PART
 I like this dress.
- b. **A yuu?**
 FOC which?
 Which?
- c. **A yuàyuà mə.**
 FOC DEM3 PART
 This one here!’

2.5 SUMMARY

The above sections have described how the demonstratives are used semantically, and bringing out the inherent meanings of the default and marked forms. The following Table summarises the various meanings of the demonstratives in their normal usage.

Table 7

	DEM Form	Function
DEM0	-a	(default) +definite +anaphora
DEM1	+a/i	particular
DEM2	+la/i	highlighting
DEM3	REDUPLICATION	Contrastive (selective)

3. PRAGMATIC USES OF THE MARKED DEMONSTRATIVES

As already mentioned and as indicated in Table (1), Bafut has marked demonstratives⁶ in addition to default ones. These marked demonstratives have their normal usage, i.e., their semantic or inherent functions, and also a marked usage, which relates to pragmatics. This section considers the pragmatic effects of using the marked demonstratives in certain contexts.

It has already been observed (in section 2) that many marked forms of the demonstrative involve repetition of form (that is, vowel or morpheme). This repetition of form often co-occurs with repetition of use. The forms are reduplicated or repeated in this sense for emphasis. Furthermore, the specific form selected is to some extent indicative of the number of times that the demonstrative has been previously used or uttered. Thus, when a demonstrative is used for the first time, it is normally the default form. If it has to be repeated (particularly by the same speaker), the form marked as particular is commonly used. If for any reason the speaker has to repeat it again, it is often the form marked as emphatic which is used and, eventually, the form marked as contrastive, if there is a cause for further repetition.

The demonstratives may therefore be arranged pragmatically in ascending degree of emphasis, as shown in Table (8) and illustrated with forms associated with noun class 5:

⁶ An initial study of the usages of the emphatic demonstratives in Bafut was done by Mfonyam (1989:165-174) and Tamanji (2009:160-163) has also treated this topic.

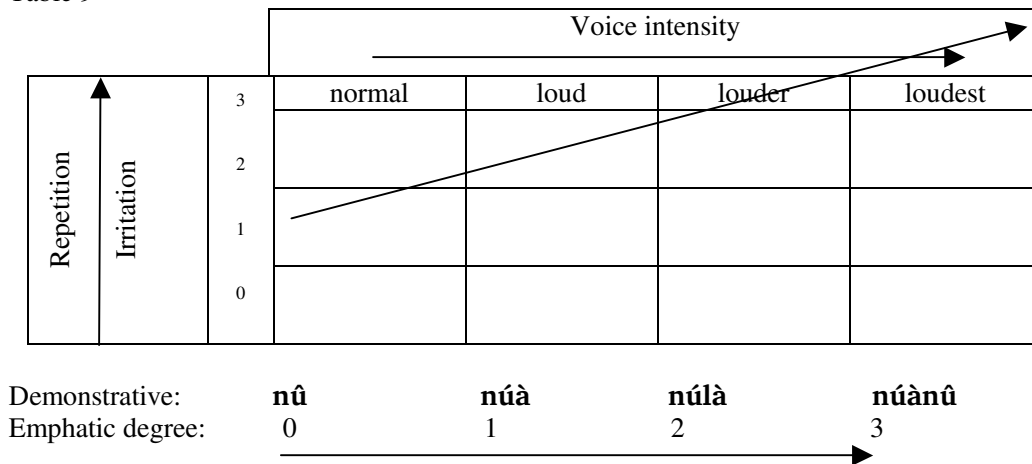
Table 8

DEM	emphatic Degree	noun class 5	F.S.H.
Default	0	nǫ̀gǫ̀	nǫ̀ ‘that plantain’
Particular	1	nǫ̀gǫ̀	nǫ̀ ‘that plantain!’
Emphatic	2	nǫ̀gǫ̀	nǫ̀ ‘that plantain!!’
Contrastive	3	nǫ̀gǫ̀	nǫ̀ ‘that plantain!!!’

The notion of emphasis conveyed by the demonstrative is relative, since it is on a scale that ranges in ascending order of degree between 0 and 3. The degree of emphasis reflected in the demonstrative selected may also be conveyed by the loudness of the speaker’s voice, and may well correspond to the degree of irritation felt. It often happens that a speaker gets irritated or emotional when he is caused to repeat one thing many times over. Each repetition makes him impatient and irritated. In this situation, the degree to which he is irritated (corresponding here to emphasis) is signalled by the loudness of the voice. The highest level of voice may lead to insult.

The interrelation of the marked demonstratives with repetition and irritation is suggested in the following chart (Table 9):

Table 9



In the above chart, the different forms of the near-speaker demonstrative associated with noun class 5 are plotted on different points on the graph. Each emphatic degree tends to correlate with both the number of repetitions or degree of irritation, and with the voice pitch. For example, the third degree emphatic demonstrative /**nǫ̀**/ tends to correlate with three times repetition, the highest degree of irritation, and also the point where the voice is loudest.

There may be various deviations and uncertain usages of the marked demonstrative, but quite a number of the people questioned agreed on the norms of usage as described above. It was also found that it is not possible or normal to go back to a form of lesser

emphatic degree once one has moved to a high degree form. For example, the author was invariably told that a speaker could not go back down the scale after having come to a third degree emphatic form since, normally, beyond this point comes insult as an expression of impatience or anger.

It should be noted that, with respect to the pragmatic use of the marked demonstrative forms, any of the last two variables or factors (i.e., repetition or voice) could be overriding. This may explain why, in actual usage, speakers sometimes violate the logical rules of emphasis such that a first degree emphatic demonstrative would be given more emphatic meaning than a second degree one by virtue of the voice variable or pitch used in each case.

It must be remembered that a person can use a form associated with second or even third degree emphasis at the first time of using the demonstrative. This is because the marked forms of the demonstrative have an inherent meaning as well as the pragmatic effects described in this section. This is illustrated in connection with the class 5 noun /**nǐbò'ò**/ 'pumpkin' as can be seen in Table 10:

Table 10

Emphatic degree	noun	N.S.	
0	nǐbò'ò	nú	'this pumpkin'
1	nǐbò'ò	núà	
2	nǐbò'ò	núlà	
3	nǐbò'ò	núà nù	

Normally, before a speaker uses /**núlà**/, he would have used /**núà**/, the first degree emphatic form. People invariably said that, when the first demonstrative they selected was a form associated with a higher degree of emphasis, it would be used for contrast, i.e., for the purpose of making a distinction between two or more nominals. Thus, if a speaker picked the demonstrative form, /**nǐbò'ò núànu**/, even though he was using the demonstrative for the first time, he would intend to convey the meaning that there were several pumpkins and that he meant a specific one. More often, in this situation, the speaker would at the same time be pointing to the particular pumpkin or item in question.⁷

The following situation illustrates a circumstance in which it is appropriate to deviate from the norm that repetition correlates with a greater degree of emphasis and thus the selection of the corresponding emphatic forms of the demonstrative: A father is saying something to his son. He says one thing over and over again. The child does not understand. The father may say it three times and yet still use the normal form of the demonstrative (/**núà**/ (DEM1), for example). The voice of the father does not change from normal. What the father means to say by using a weaker form of the demonstrative is this: *'My son, even though I say this same thing several times and you do not understand, I shall not change my voice (volume) or use a stronger form of the demonstrative because I love you and I refuse to be irritated with you.'*

⁷ See example (8c) for an occasion in which the first repetition of the demonstrative is the form associated with the second degree of emphasis, in order to stress that Tortoise is "here".

Although this example might be hypothetical, it serves to show that deviation from the norms of usage of the marked demonstratives that have been described in this paper can be explained in terms of intended pragmatic effects.

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have examined the role of demonstratives within the reference system of Bafut. The demonstratives in Bafut have many forms (more than 100 forms) governed by the noun class system. The different forms indicate relative distance from the speaker and hearer (spatial deixis). The default forms of the demonstrative can be used deictically and anaphorically. The near-hearer form of the default demonstrative in its anaphoric function can be used to mark definiteness.

Each of the demonstratives also has additional forms which are marked as particular, highlighting or contrastive and can convey up to three degrees of emphasis. The marked demonstratives have their normal usage, i.e., their semantic or inherent functions, and also a marked usage, which relates to pragmatics. The default forms of the demonstratives are referred to as having emphatic degree zero (0) while the marked forms are placed in an ascending order as follows: the particular forms have emphatic degree one (1), the highlighting forms have emphatic degree two (2), and the contrastive forms have emphatic degree three (3). Each emphatic degree tends to correlate with both the number of repetitions or degree of irritation, and with the voice pitch.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN	anaphoric	P0	immediate past tense
DEM	demonstrative	P3	distant past tense
F.S.H.	far from speaker and hearer	PART	particle
FOC	focus marker	PX	prefix
IMPF	imperfect	PREP	preposition
LOG	logophoric pronoun	REL	relative pronoun
N.H.	near hearer	SS	same subject marker
N.S.	near speaker	3S	third person singular

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