

IDEOPHONES IN BAFUT

Melvice Asohsi
University of Western Australia
melasbrown@yahoo.com

Abstract

Reduplicated words that vividly depict sensory imagery are very conspicuous among languages of the Grassfields region of Cameroon. The prolific use and expressive potential of such reduplicated words simply reflect the ways that speakers construct, interpret and negotiate meanings. Despite their pervasiveness in these languages, increasing research and grammatical descriptions document very little on them thereby limiting the understanding of their functions and uniqueness in each language. This paper adds data to the literature on ideophones by describing ideophones in Bafut, focusing on their structural properties. With reduplication at the core of their formation, they mostly intensify the meanings of other words while some designate entities. Their functions and syntactic properties are not suggestive of a separate word class as is the case in other languages. Rather, Bafut ideophones show ties with other word classes, as well as audible sounds and actions performed by the entities that they designate. Some of the ideophones display an iconic relationship between sound and meaning. This study also shows that the reduplication of morphemes to form designations for small creatures that come in swarms is a process which is not limited to Bafut alone but cuts across a group of languages in the Grassfields.

Keywords: ideophones, reduplication, small creatures, iconicity, Grassfields Bantu.

1. Introduction*

Ideophones are very pervasive in most African languages and especially those of the Grassfields region of Cameroon. Although prevalent in these languages, many grammatical descriptions simply acknowledge their existence without further investigation. Those descriptions that list ideophones often leave out the names of tiny creatures¹, some of which are ideophonic. This marginal exploration of ideophones is justified for a number of reasons. To begin with, they are often considered to be a feature of oral language which is difficult to characterize and document. Also, since 'sound symbolic language is not designed for convenient reproduction into a literate two-dimensional form' (Nuckolls 1995:165), some language consultants face difficulties in translating their precise meanings and simply claim that ideophones are 'not proper words' (Reiter 2011:4). Moreover, ideophones are treated with less vigour because of their failure to play a major role in syntax (Blench 2013). However, the major reason why ideophones have remained marginal in the description of African languages is mainly because the people describing these languages mostly do not know the languages very well and do not have sufficient insight into the inner workings of these languages.

This paper examines ideophones in Bafut and divides them into two groups based on their syntactic properties and functions. The first group (which is quite extensive) contains ideophones that function as intensifiers and the second are designations for entities. Both partial and total reduplication are very active in deriving ideophones in Bafut. The ideophones show phonological strings that are identical or partially identical, reflecting a typical repetitive movement or sound characteristic of the object or action that is being referred to. As subsequent discussions will reveal, the ideophones and reduplication are neither in lockstep with each other nor totally independent of each other but simply create a synthesis and lexicalizes reduplication in which words are communicated succinctly through imitative sound qualities or actions performed.

*Many thanks to the anonymous JWAL reviewers whose insightful remarks have significantly increased the quality of this paper.

¹ Tiny (small) creatures here refer to small plants, insects and birds that mostly come in agglomeration. Some of these creatures have sonic capabilities.

Contrary to the idea that ideophones do not portray real reduplication but only meaningless iteration or a kind of frozen reduplication (Stolz, Strohl & Urdze 2011; Schwaiger 2013), this paper will show that the repetition of morphemes to name some entities is not a coincidence or an arbitrary process but a deliberate meaningful descriptive operation employed by native speakers. Note that these entities, particularly tiny creatures, interact with humans on a daily basis and form an integral part of the ecoculture of the communities in which they are found. They are used in songs, proverbs, riddles and stories. As such, they occupy an important place in the ethno biological terminology of these languages and merit some attention.

2. Bafut within Grassfields Bantu languages

Bafut belongs to the Ngemba group of Eastern Grassfields languages spoken in the North West region of Cameroon. With a population of approximately 115.000 speakers (Neba: 2012:33) on a surface area of 425 square kilometres, it has two regional and two social dialects. The regional dialects are only different at the phonological level, more specifically with pronunciation, while lexical differences distinguish the social dialects². Quite much has been documented on the Bafut language but the knowledge of ideophones is still very superficial. Data is also provided from three other languages in the Grassfields (see figure 1 below) to further illustrate that reduplication is an active process in the formation of designations for small creatures in these languages. Note that these languages have not been chosen randomly but are representative of four subgroups within the Grassfields Bantu Group of languages. Aghem belongs to the Ring languages -named after the so-called Ring road-of Western Grassfields. Obang belongs to the Menchum group while Oshie falls under the Momo group of languages. A rough linguistic orientation is presented in the following table, adapted from Watters (2003:226).

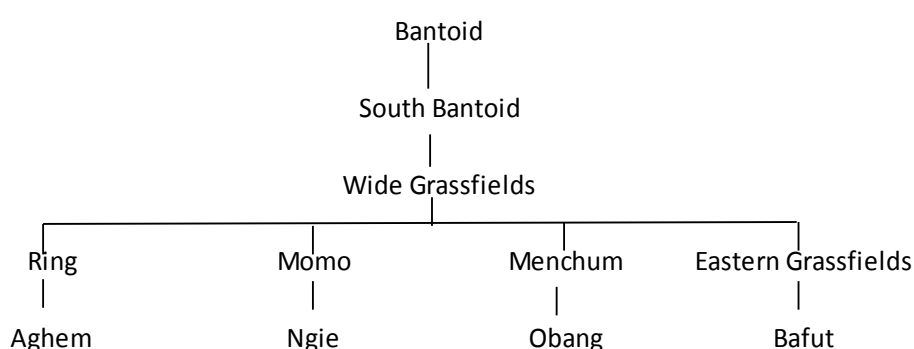


Figure1. Genetic classification of Bantoid according to Watters (2003:226)

These languages share some basic structural properties. They exhibit predominantly Subject-verb-object word (SVO) order. Both simple and complex tonal combinations play a paramount role in the overall organization of meaning. However, the most salient property that unites these languages is the system of grammatical agreement operated by means of prefixes.

3. Diverse tags on ideophones

The diversity and uniqueness found in ideophones has been the impetus behind the varied definitions advanced by different scholars, with idiosyncrasies in particular languages, all fuelled by the drive to find a common ground. Doke (1935:118) considers an ideophone as ‘a word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative, or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or

² Tamanji (2009) provides a description of the regional and social dialects spoken in Bafut. Neba (2013) also provides an exhaustive documentation on Bafut honorifics (social dialect) in Bafut.

intensity'. They are 'picture words' in Westermann's (1930:187) terms and considered by Crystal (1997:189) as a '....term used in linguistics and phonetics for any vivid representation of an idea in sound, such as occurs through onomatopoeia'. He further notes that in Bantu linguistics, 'it is the name of a particular word class containing sound symbolic words'. All these descriptions somehow highlight the fact that ideophones provide the opportunity for listeners to imagine what it is like to perceive the events depicted.

In order to take care of terminological issues regarding the cross-linguistic study of these elusive words, Dingemanse (2011a:25-7) sums up ideophones as 'marked words that depict sensory imagery'. He posits that this description takes in to consideration the recurrent features of sound symbolic words such as 'their structural markedness, syntactic aloofness, or their imagistic semantics' (p.35). These depictions 'enable others to experience what it is like to perceive the scene depicted' (Dingemanse 2011b:358). His definition is quite appealing in describing the set of ideophones in this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, referring to ideophones as 'marked' implies that they are structurally marked (unusual consonant clusters, reduplication etc.). Secondly, its emphasis on semantic criteria, which looks at the notion of depiction, is very vital. Thirdly, the notion of 'sensory imagery' mentioned in his definition covers abstract notions such as 'events, emotions and perception'. They are described as picture words based on the sensory images that they portray. As will be demonstrated subsequently, reduplication in Bafut creates words that depict images related to visual, audible, by sound-poetic means.

4. Ideophones in Grassfields Bantu

Ideophones are very loud and clear in Grassfields languages but the knowledge of their role in these languages is still precursory. Ayuninjam (1998) acknowledges the presence of such sensory words in Mbili (Eastern Grassfields) and treats them as intensifiers. Blench (2010) provides data on ideophones expressing emotional states in Limbum (Eastern Grassfields) and Tamanji (2009) presents a non-negligible amount of their occurrences in Bafut. Akumbu & Fogwe (2012) also make reference to ideophones in Babanki and a recent study (Akumbu 2016) describes ideophones in Kejom as a separate class of words in this language. A complete knowledge of ideophones however needs to consider their loaded sensory meanings, interactional uses and their place in the wider linguistic and cultural ecology (Ameka 2001; Dingemanse 2012; Newman 2001).

5. Ideophones in Bafut

Ordinary words in Bafut do not attract much attention unlike ideophones. Ideophones occur profusely in conversations and cannot escape the attention of listeners not only because they are high-pitched, reduplicated³ (in most cases) and lengthened, but also because they are often performatively embellished. They are used to name entities, express emotions, dramatize narratives as appeals to concrete experiences etc. Note that ideophones are used across all regional and social dialects in Bafut.

Bafut harnesses reduplication, pitch and lengthening as derivational resources, to produce ideophones as a strategy to identify and to draw attention to an event or performance. For instance the high-pitched articulation of *twààtwàà* "HIV/AIDS" (derived from the sound of a running stomach), *hòòhòò* "sound of snoring" *wúúhú wúúhú* 'sound made by a royal messenger' immediately gets listener interested in the scene or event. Such sensory vocabulary stand out from other words in several ways: (i) they undergo expressive lengthening of the final vowel or syllable as in *ñíííííííí* "sound made by a bunch of flies"; (ii) they are often repeated, the number of repetitions being a matter of individual manipulation and style) - *té'é'té'é'té'é'* 'sound from a slow dripping liquid' can be repeated for as long as possible; (iii) some are

³ Tamanji (2012:75) also notes that some ideophones are formed via reduplication

coarticulated with gestures for semantic intensity, for instance *wébébébé* ‘bewildered cry of surprise/shock’, is articulated with a simultaneous tapping of fingers on the mouth. Such a unified expression denotes a higher degree of the same emotion of ‘surprise/shock’. Similar gestural depictions accompanying ideophones have also been highlighted for Kusaal (Abubakari 2017:54), where finger tips, stretched hands and palms accompany ideophones aimed at creating a shared experience with interlocutors and also for semantic clarity.

Based on their syntactic properties and functions, Bafut ideophones do not form a separate coherent word class as is the case in languages such as Dagaare (Bodomo 2006:207). Rather, they fall under two groups. The first group comprises uninflected onomatopoeic forms that function as intensifiers (related to adjectives, verbs/adverbs (table 1) and the second set expresses the existence of an entity (table 3). The following table provides a non exhaustive list of intensifying ideophones and their associated semantic classes.

Table 1. Adjective and verb intensifying ideophones

Class	Example	Gloss	IDEO	Example	Gloss
Adj	fíí	‘dark’	tʃín	fíí tʃín	‘pitch dark’
	fú’ú	‘white’	búú:	fú’ú búú	‘bright white’
	jí’í	‘stay’	swíí:	jí’í swíí:	‘stay dead silent’
	ɣè’è	‘reddden /ripen’	bòò:	ɣè’è bòò:	‘scarlet red’
	lòò	‘hot’	bùù:	lòò bùù:	‘scorching hot’

Verb	wê	‘fall’	bîm	wê bîm	‘loud fall’
	fî’î	‘boil’	bágè bágè	fî’î bágè bágè	‘sound of bubbling from boiling’
	téé	‘walk’	nòm nòm	téé nóm nòm	‘walk softly’
	lûm	‘smell’	tʃún	lûm tʃún	‘stinking’
	tá	‘shine’	twín	tá twín	‘shining brightly’
	tsáá	‘chew’	tórì tòrì	tsáá tórì tòrì	‘crunch’
	tsìgìnó	‘shiver’	bá’àbà’á	tsìgìnó bá’àbà’á	‘shiver with cold’

The data in table 1 is consistent with what is known about ideophones across languages. Phonologically, their vowels can be lengthened to create an expressive effect, they also display onomatopoeia. Semantically, they heighten the meanings of the verbs and adjectives by evoking images depictive of manner, colour, sound, smell, size, state of intensity and action. Morphosyntactically, these ideophones are reduplicated and predominantly occur after the words that they modify in affirmative declarative sentences (we discuss this in section 8).

Among the second set of ideophones (those that express the existence of an entity) are also designations for some tiny creatures. Since reduplication- a major property of ideophones (Beck 2008:5)- in Bafut is the main operation in the formation of such ideophonic nouns, we briefly look at reduplication before finding out how it operates in forming ideophones.

6. A note on reduplication in Bafut

The operation of repeating the morphological base of a word either entirely or only partially (Haspelmath 2002:274) is very productive in Bafut. Its pervasiveness is

encountered at the syntactic, morphological and phonological levels. In very simple instances, words are simply repeated the way they are while in complex cases, an extra morpheme is required and some tonal changes are also expected. Tamanji (2009:207-211) describes partial and total reduplication in Bafut and shows how reduplication is used derivationally to alter word classes as in the following examples. The symbol (~) is used to separate the reduplicant and the base while (-) separates the noun root from the noun class prefix.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------|---------|----------------|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|
| (1) | a. | ndɜwí | ‘day’ | tũndɜwí | ‘daily’ | tũndɜwí ~ tũndɜwí | ‘every day’ |
| | b. | sàŋ | ‘month’ | túsàŋ | ‘monthly’ | túsàŋ ~ túsàŋ | ‘every month’ |
| | c. | lòò | ‘year’ | túlòò | ‘yearly’ | túlòò ~ túlòò | ‘every year’ |
| | d. | nòò | ‘time’ | túnòò | ‘often’ | túnòò ~ túnòò | ‘every time’ |
-
- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------------|------------|----------------------|--|
| (2) | a. | kúù | ‘enter’ | Ø-kúù ~ kúù | ‘foreigner’ |
| | b. | tswî | ‘sit/stay’ | Ø-tswî ~ tswî | ‘original settler’ |
| | c. | sígê | ‘descend’ | Ø-sígê ~ sígê | ‘descendant from a higher geographical region’ |
| | d. | kó’ó | ‘climb’ | Ø-kó’ó ~ kó’ó | ‘descendant from a lower geographical region’ |

In (1), prepositional phrases reduplicate to signal temporal regularity, while direction verbs (2) reduplicate to create nouns that designate settlers who have moved in from a neighbouring geographical region. Notice that even the preposition (*tú*) is also reduplicated.

Still in Bafut, verbs can reduplicate to express an emphatic condition emphasizing contrast (3) or repeated events (4).

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------------|---------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| (3) | | stem | gloss | reduplication | gloss |
| | a. | bì’î | ‘carry’ | bíbì’î | ‘carry (not the contrary)’ |
| | a. | kû | ‘enter’ | kúkû | ‘get in (not the contrary)’ |
| | c. | tâ | ‘kick’ | tátâ | ‘kick (not the contrary)’ |
| | d. | dàrê | ‘fly’ | dádàrê | ‘fly (not the contrary)’ |
-
- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (4) | a. | bì’î | ‘carry’ | bì ’ím̀bì’î | ‘carry repeatedly’ |
| | b. | kû | ‘enter’ | kúŋkúú | ‘enter repeatedly’ |
| | c. | tâ | ‘kick’ | tántá | ‘kick repeatedly’ |
| | d. | dàrê | ‘fly’ | dàréndàrê | ‘fly repeatedly’ |

The same verb stems have been used in (3) and (4) in order to clearly illustrate the changes that take place when verbs double to emphasise contrast as opposed to when they double to indicate repeated events. Contrastive reduplication (3) contrasts actions by putting emphasis on a particular action as opposed to another as in *kúkû tsúú fê’è* ‘go/get in’ (instead) do not go/get out’. In this usage, the emphasis is on the reduplicated form *kúkû* ‘enter’, which is contrasted with *fê’è* ‘get out’. Also notice that the full reduplicative forms in (4) are not as simple as those in (3) but have been made complex by the insertion of a homorganic nasal between the reduplicants. Some tonal changes can also be observed in both (3) & (4). In (3a) & (d), low tones on the first syllables become high in the reduplicated form but remain low in (4a) & (d). Suffice

to mention that Bafut has a very complex tone system⁴ (comprising both lexical and floating tones) which becomes even more complicated when words are collocated. The sources of tones on such reduplicated forms have been noted by Neba (2012) to originate from tense, lexical items, or even from reduplication itself.

Having provided a concise overview of reduplication in Bafut, the next section looks at the second set of ideophones, that is, nouns that have been obtained simply by repeating existing morphemes and sounds.

7. Ideophonic nouns obtained by reduplication

The second set of ideophones is not intensifying in nature but are designations for some entities. Their capability to function as nouns is found in their ability to accommodate noun class prefixes. Created using the same model of partial or total reduplication, onomatopoeia equally plays a role in their composition. Even though all languages are claimed to have onomatopoeia (Harrison 2007:214), the nature of such mimicry vocabulary still remains language specific. Consider the following examples:

Table 2A. Insects

Singular	Plural	Gloss
ŋí ~ ŋín	bì-ŋí ~ ŋín	'fruit/tiny flie(s)'
jwìgè ~ jwìgè	bì-jwìgè ~ jwìgè	'annoying flie(s)'
nì-yê ~ yê	mì-yê ~ yê	'praying mantis(es)'
à-tfù ~ tfùrè	ì-tfù ~ tfùrè	'caterpillar(s)'

Table 2B. Birds and plants

à-kì ~ kún	ì-kì ~ kún	'owl(s)'
à-wàá ~ wàà	ì-wàá ~ wàà	'type of grass'
m̀bì ~ m̀bì̀	m̀bì ~ m̀bì̀	'type of popping grass'
̀̀dì ~ ̀̀dì	̀̀dì ~ ̀̀dì	'moss'
k̀̀rì ~ k̀̀rì	bì-k̀̀rì ~ k̀̀rì	'type of thorny creeping plant'

Table 2C. Miscellaneous

twàà ~ twàà	twàà ~ twàà	'HIV/AIDS'
nì-bù ~ bùù	mì-bù ~ bùù	'waterfall(s)'
túgí ~ túgí	bì-túgí ~ túgí	'motorcycle(s)'
kwàṅ ~ kwàṅ	bì-kwàṅ ~ kwàṅ	'noisy disagreement(s)'

The forms in table 2 are doubled either partially or completely. They are composed of flora, fauna as well as entities that are transparently onomatopoeic. That is, they evoke the sound or action of the event that they refer to. These onomatopoeic forms have fully penetrated the morphological system of this language such that in some cases, the reduplicated forms have become fossilized and their simple forms without reduplication can no longer be found. This is because what actually seems to be the reduplicating morpheme or base in most cases has no clear independent meaning, but seems to be an idea captured in sound. For example *ŋín* in *ŋínŋín* 'fruit fly' and *twàà* in *twààtwàà* 'HIV/AIDS' are not independent bases in the language. Ideophonic reduplication as used here is simply reduplication in which words are communicated succinctly through imitative action or sound qualities. The best way to understand these ideophones is to use concrete examples. The following sentences

⁴ See Neba (2012) for details on tone assignment in reduplicated forms and Tamanji (2012) for details on reduplication and its functions in Bafut.

illustrate how these reduplicated stems have been derived by sounds made and actions performed typically by small creatures⁵.

- (5) a. **mà kì sí tjà bì-ńíńńí bìnà á wá**
 1SG P2 Asp pass 2-fruit flies rise Prep the
ndzɪ'ì à-tì máńgòrè ńíííííí
 under 7-tree 1.mango IDEO
 'As I passed by, the fruit flies rose under the mango tree ńíííííí (noisily)'

- b. **à-kìkúń kòò kúkú n-lè-sí bós tí-bwí**
 07-owl hoot IDEO N⁶-sleep-CAUS 2.children Neg-sleep
 'An owl is hooting kúkú, making the children unable to sleep'

- c. **bì-jwìgè jwìgè ká jwìgè táà á múm à-kò**
 2-annoying fly F0 whip 1.father Prep inside 7-bush
 'The annoying flies will whip father in the bush'

- d. **ń-bìmbì'ì j-á kì bì'í ñ-gwìnnì j-á lô**
 9-pop grass 9-the P2 explode 9-locust 9-the leave
 'The grass⁷ popped and the locusts left'

bì-ńíńńí (5a) describes the audible sound emitted by a bunch of buzzing fruit flies rising from a surface. In 5b), the name of the owl also appears to have come directly from the sound (*kúkú*) produced by this bird. When describing these creatures, speakers tend to dramatize with the audible sounds that are perceived from them. In the same vein, *à-wàá~wàà* 'type of grass' originates from the audible sound produced by this particular type of grass. *bì-jwìgèjwìgè* (5c) describes the action of the verb by enabling the hearer to imagine a complete scene of a bunch of annoying flies intermittently whipping or buzzing on the face. Similarly, *ń-bìmbì'ì* (5d) originates from the action performed when the pollen from this grass pop (*bì'í*). While iconic motivation is certainly true for these examples, not all the items show evidence of transparency between a denoted sound/action and the word that tags it (see section 8.4.1).

8. Structure of ideophones in Bafut.

8.1 Phonological features

8.1.1 Phoneme inventory/ syllable structure

Ideophones have been noted to make use of unusual segments beyond the borders of the regular phoneme inventory of languages. In Bafut, the only strange element identified so far is the voiceless glottal fricative [h]. Its occurrence is extremely limited and has been identified only in *hòòhòò* 'sound of snoring' and *wúúhú wúúhú* 'sound made by a royal messenger as a call for attention'.

The occurrence of long vowels in ideophones (6) is not a violation of any phonotactic rule in Bafut; long vowels are contrastive (7) in this language. What makes vowels in ideophones stand out is their propensity to be lengthened (6) which is not the case with the vowels in (7). Ideophones further obey the rules of the language by permitting only nasals in coda position (8d & e).

⁵ The ideophonic reduplicated stems here are not calling or chasing sounds, i.e. -sounds used by people to interact with animals either by calling them towards the speaker or chasing them away from the speaker, - but are the names conventionally used by speakers to refer to these beings.

⁶ A homorganic nasal which according to Mfonyam (1989:277), is a marker of consecutivization and a coordinating nasal based on Neba (2012:37).

⁷ Pollen from this grass pops just like popcorn.

- (6) a. **lèè:** 'ideophone for the silent flow of water'
 b. **tèè:** 'ideophone for a free-flowing liquid'
 c. **swíí:** 'ideophone for being very quiet'
 d. **tsèè:** 'ideophone for being very clean'
 e. **bùù:** 'loud sound from a downpour'
 f. **bìì:** 'ideophone for being very hot (as of fire)'
- (7) a. **tô** 'fight' **tóô** 'send'
 b. **tû** 'pay' **túú** 'refuse'
 c. **à-bô** 'hand' **à-bóò** 'hunt'
 d. **kwî** 'open' **kwíí** 'fill up'
 e. **à-tì** 'stick/tree' **à-tìì** 'waist'

In terms of syllable structure, ideophones do not show strings that are not obtainable elsewhere in the language. The following table summarizes the syllable structures obtained for ideophonic reduplicated nouns examined so far.

(8)	Syllable structure	Example	Gloss
a.	CVCV ~ CVCV	jwìgè ~ jwìgè	'annoying fly'
b.	CV ~ CVCV	bì ~ mbì'ì	'type of popping grass'
c.	CV ~ CVV	bù ~ bùù	'waterfall'
d.	CVC ~ CVC	kwàŋ ~ kwàŋ	'noisy disagreement'
e.	CV ~ CVC	ŋí ~ ŋíŋ	'fruit/tiny fly'
f.	CV ~ CV	dì ~ ndì	'moss'
g.	CVV ~ CVV	wàá ~ wàà	'type of grass'
h.	CVCV ~ CVCV	kèrì ~ kèrí	'type of thorny creeping plant'

8.1.2 Sound symbolism /Expressive lengthening

Using ideophones to communicate succinct messages finds expression in onomatopoeic terms. Such relation between sound and meaning in Bafut ideophones is apparently felt by native speakers and can sometimes be conjectured by non-native speakers. As illustrated in (5), with more examples to follow (9), a majority of the ideophones inherently echo the sounds made by the creatures or actions performed thereby enhancing one's comprehension of these creatures even from an outsider's perspective.

- (9) a. **mó'ó w-á kó'ó mó wùù á w-á n-tá'á**
 fire 1-the climb PART IDEO Prep 1-the 3-hill
 'The fire is blazing continuously on the hill'
- b. **suh kwô tì mû wémééé**
 Suh die Neg child IDEO
 'Suh has died childless wémééé (loud uproarious complaint with wailing)'
- c. **ŋ-gò'ò j-á wô á mûm ŋkxì mó tǝm**
 9-rock 9-the FALL Prep inside water PART IDEO
 'The rock has fallen in the water tǝm (loud sound)'

As mentioned earlier, the final syllables of ideophones can be expressively lengthened to create the experience of something that can last long. *wùù* (9a)

describes the sound and tremendous intensity of fire burning unceasingly on a hill. The prolongation of *wémééé* (9b), with a high pitch, stands out even in the quietest conversations and attracts attention to the scene. Such remarkable high pitches is what Dingemanse (2014) following Nuckolls (1996) refers to as ‘performative foregrounding’, where the ideophone is louder than the surrounding material.

8.2 Morphological features

8.2.1 Class category

On the morphological front, intensifying ideophones are not inflected whereas ideophonic nouns behave like regular nouns by accommodating noun class prefixes. The inputs for these ideophonic nouns are predominantly verbs and the audible sounds made by these entities.

Table 3. Inputs for ideophonic nouns

Ideophonic Noun	Input	Gloss
<i>ŋí~ŋín</i>	sound made by tiny flies	‘tiny flies’
<i>twàà~twàà</i>	sound from a running stomach	‘HIV/AIDS’
<i>túgí~túgí</i>	Sound from a motorcycle	‘motorcycle’
<i>jwígó</i>	verb	‘whip’
<i>jwígó~jwígó</i>	noun	‘bush fly’
<i>tsúró</i>	verb	‘undulate/wiggle’
<i>tsú~tsúró</i>	noun	‘caterpillar’
<i>bí’í</i>	verb	‘pop’
<i>mbì~mbì’i</i>	noun	‘type of popping grass’

The ideophonic forms in table 3 show derivational relations to audible sounds and verbs, an indication that reduplication is capable of turning ordinary words or sounds in to ideophones. This does not in any way imply that all sounds from the surrounding are employed in ideophones. The decision of what to include or exclude in a language’s ideophonic repertoire remains a cultural decision. This explains why ideophonic repertoires are different for every language.

8.2.2 Reduplication

As must have been noticed from the foregone sections, it is not possible to talk about ideophones in Bafut without reduplication. Reduplication, which Beck (2008:5) considers to be the major distinguishing properties of ideophones, is glaringly the most active morphological process in the derivation of Bafut ideophones. Dingemanse (2014) equally highlights that ideophones are ‘susceptible to expressive morphology such as lengthening and reduplication’. This does not however imply that all ideophones reduplicate. While a majority do, there are some like *swâŋ* ‘haste or promptness’, *bîm* ‘loud fall’ that do not duplicate.

Morphologically, ideophonic nouns display patterns of total and partial reduplication. Total reduplication, which repeats the whole base with minimal or no modifications (10), is also the most recurrent reduplicative pattern favoured by ideophones of onomatopoeic origin (see table 2c). In these cases, the direction of reduplication (whether it is to the right or to the left of the base) is less evident.

- (10) a. *dòŋ~dòŋ* ‘ideophone for being long and thin’
 b. *dzín~dzín* ‘a very loud jingling noise as of anklets’
 c. *dʒwán~dʒwán* ‘ideophone for being empty’
 d. *bà’à~bà’à* ‘ideophone for the act of shivering with cold’
 e. *ntwàm~ntwàm* ‘ideophone for being naked’

- f. **kwàṅ~kwàṅ** ‘sound of nailing on the roof; a rowdy disagreement’
 g. **kàtə~kàtə** ‘ideophone for a quick strong walk’

The repetition of a part of the base only (partial reduplication), is noticed in a small subset of nouns such as *bì~mbì'ì* (CV~CVCV) and *kì~kúṅ* (CV ~CVC). This observation has also been made by Tamanji (2009:207), who notes that total reduplication is the predominant type in Bafut while partial reduplication only affects a restricted set of verbs and nouns.

Most of the ideophones presented so far can only double once (like the examples in (10). There is however a restricted set of ideophones that undergo triplication. They feature with a unique prosodic contour, providing a further intensified reading. Examples include *wébébébé* ‘bewildered cry, expressing surprise and or shock’, *lélélé* ‘ululating sound’, *bìbìbì* ‘sound for fast dripping of liquid’. An interesting property of triplicated ideophones is that they can stand alone, which is not the case with reduplicated ideophones.

To sum up the discussion on reduplication, as illustrated earlier in table 2a & b, Bafut builds double words or morphemes to form names of small creatures. More examples are provided in (11). Note that while the nouns in table 2 are ideophonic, those in (11) are not. The latter have simply been provided to show that the doubling of morphemes to form names of small creatures is quite pervasive in this language.

(11)	Singular	Plural	Gloss
a.	nì-bòṅə ~ bòṅə	mì-bòṅə ~ bòṅə	‘ant(s)’
b.	à-kí ~ kóó	ì-kí ~ kóó	‘type of insect(s)’
c.	à-lí ~ lóó	ì-lí ~ lóó	‘bat(s)’
d.	à-sì ~ sòṅ	ì-sì ~ sòṅ	‘elephant grass’
e.	ṅ-kènə ~ kénə	ṅ-kènə ~ kénə	‘type of slimy vegetable’
f.	fì-nté ~ nté	mì-nté ~ nté	‘berries’
g.	à-fùrí ~ fwá	ì-fùrí ~ fwá	‘ducks’

However, the current study will be biased if it exclusively claims that the names of small creatures are always reduplicated. The data in (12) show that not all insect names are reduplicated.

(12)	Singular	plural	Gloss
a.	fùm	bì-fùm	‘carpenter bee(s)’
b.	tsíítákòrì	bì-tsíítákòrì	‘wall cricket(s)’
c.	fì-ríndzó	mì-ríndzó	‘midge(s)’
d.	ṅ-tìrí	ṅ-tìrí	‘louse/lice’
e.	à-ntsínə	ṅ-tsínə	‘cricket(s)’
f.	lí	mì-lí	‘soldier ant(s)’
g.	á-mbénû	m-bénû	‘bee(s)’

8.3 Syntactic features

In declarative sentences, intensifying ideophones occur after the lexical item whose meaning is being intensified such as verbs (13a & b) and adjectives (13c), and are introduced by an optional demonstrational lexical particle (quotative marker) *má*. This particle cannot be used to introduce ideophonic nouns.

- (13) a. **bó** **kì** **nò** **mì-lù'ù** **N-nóṅə** **N-ɜwì** **mə** **hòðhòð**
 they P2 drink 6-palm N-sleep N- breathe PART IDEO
 wine
 ‘They drank palm wine, slept and snored *hòðhòð* (loudly)’

- b. **ɲ-kxì w-á sáá tè'ètè'è**
 1-water 1-the leak IDEO
 'The water is dripping tè'ètè'è (each droplet can be heard falling)'

- c. **ɲ-ù w-á kì láá à-kwèè y-í tî mó kóŋ**
 1-person 1-the P2 cook 7-bone 7-it strong PART IDEO
 'The man cooked a bone and it was **kóŋ** (very hard)'

In a question sentence (yes/no questions), ideophones still occur at the right edge of the clause (14b). Basically, question sentences are different from their declarative counterparts by a general rise in intonation and a faster delivery rate. In negative⁸ constructions, they occur before the verb as illustrated in (14c). Equally observe (14c) that their occurrence in a preverbal position does not disqualify them from being lengthened.

- (14) a. **mìjàà w-á kóŋá á mûm ñ-sòò mó làà:**
 1-river 1-the flow in inside 1-farm PART IDEO
 'The river is flowing **làà:** (gently and quietly) in the farm'
- b. **mìjàà w-á kóŋá á mûm ñ-sòò mó làà:**
 1-river 1-the flow in inside 1-farm PART IDEO
 'Is the river flowing **làà:** (gently and quietly) in the farm?'
- c. **(kàá) mìjàà w-á sí á mûm ñ-sòò**
 Neg 1-river 1-the Neg in inside 1-farm
mó làà: kóŋá
 PART IDEO flow
 'The river is not flowing **làà:** (gently and quietly) in the farm'

8.4 Semantic features

Ideophones convey a range of meanings or sensory experiences ranging from sound description (auditory) to action or visual (imaginistic), as well as suddenness of the action described. *ɲíŋíŋ* 'fruit fly and *kìkúŋ* 'owl', permits the speaker to produce the particular sound that is heard from these creatures. *ñ-γāγā* 'praying mantis', renders a visual impression of not just any kind of movement but a slow, wobbly and unsteady movement. In these instances, the speaker assumes the role of an actor where he or she creates an image that presents a vivid representation of the actual sound and movement. The usage of these ideophones appears to be quite similar to how ideophones are used according to Dingemanse (2014:4), who points out that 'ideophones show rather than tell, depict rather than describe, enact rather than simply refer'.

The performative potential of the ideophonic nouns on their part equally allow them to contribute important semantic content to the verb by underscoring and combining meanings of different verbs in just one word. They are the only means of expressing imaginative concepts such as insects buzzing, something boiling and bubbling, a falling object etc.

8.4.1 Iconicity and ideophones

Iconicity refers to the conceived similarity between linguistic form and conceptual structure (Fischer & Nänny 2001). It is 'a direct correlation between a

⁸ Bafut has two negation markers: an optional pre-subject marker *kàá* and a post subject marker *sí*.

conceptual notion or distinction and its linguistic representation' (Trask 1993:131). As must have been noticed so far, some of the ideophones that we have come across clearly display an iconic relationship. But not all ideophones show a transparent form-meaning mapping (Nuckolls 1992). In addition, even if iconicity is present, not all ideophones display the same degree of iconicity; certain ideophones are transparently iconic than others. Dingemanse (2011a:164) groups lexical iconicity (based on Peirce (1932) into imagic iconicity, gestalt iconicity, and relative iconicity. The ideophones in this paper display properties of imagic iconicity and gestalt iconicity only.

Imagic iconicity refers to the mimicking of sounds in the real world as in onomatopoeic ideophones. This type of iconicity has a direct link between the signifier and the signified. For example the water related ideophones in (15) map sound to sound. These cases are consistent with Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz's (2001:1) observation that 'the word formation of ideophones differs from other words in their tendency for iconicity and sound symbolism'.

- (15) a. **bùù** 'sound of a heavy downpour (waterfall)
 b. **lèè** 'sound for the silent flow of liquid'
 c. **bàgèbàgè** 'bubbling noise made by water or any other liquid'
 d. **kwè'è kwè'è** 'sound of gulping liquid'
 e. **tèè** 'sound of a free-flowing liquid pouring on the ground'
 f. **tùm** 'sound of diving or falling into water'

Gestalt iconicity, a type of diagrammatic iconicity, involves mapping a relation between word structure and that of the perceived event. That is, the form of the word somehow has a bearing on its meaning. For instance most of the monosyllabic ideophones that contain long vowels evoke unitary but durative events and short vowels depict suddenness. *wùù* depicts a fire blazing strongly and continuously while *wù* (with a short vowel) depicts a sudden and non durative blaze. Punctuality and suddenness are also depicted in monosyllabic ideophones such as *swân* 'haste, quickness, promptness' and *tùm* 'diving or falling into water'. Some reduplicated stems also reflect the perception of an event's iteration: *jwígà~jwígà* 'annoying fly, captures the idea of continuous whipping or buzzing around the face. The gestalt iconic nature of this ideophone can be illustrated by contrasting it with its non-reduplicated counterpart *jwígà* 'whip (once)'. In this case, the unitary form of the word resembles the singular or unitary form of the perceived event while the reduplicated form highlights the multiplicity or iterative nature of the event. These examples clearly show that some of the lexical patterns in these ideophones are semantically motivated. Such heavy lexical loads highlight their expressive potentials.

Even though there exist clear cases where the reduplicating base is an independent word in the language (*jwígà* 'to whip/flog', *tsùrà* 'undulate'), there is a substantial number of reduplicated ideophones that are not transparently phonosemantic. For instance *ndì* in *ndìndì* 'moss', literally means 'old woman', and does not in any way reflect a small, flowerless, carpet-like green plant. Such cases of irregularity confirm to the fact that not all ideophones show a transparent form-meaning mapping (Nuckolls 1992).

9. Formation of designations for small creatures in other Grassfields languages

Is the harnessing of reduplication as a derivational strategy for creating designations for small creatures limited to Bafut alone? In an attempt to answer this question, some data were gathered from three other languages⁹ (Aghem, Oshie and

⁹ Note that these languages have been selected from the different groups not for any reason but motivated by easy access to informants and data.

Obang) within the Grassfields, and a related observation reveals that reduplication of morphemes to form names of small creatures occurs in these languages. Before presenting examples from these languages, it must be remarked that unlike Bafut, the present study has not investigated the ideophonic statuses of the names of the small creatures in these other languages. Data from these languages have been presented to simply show that the process of doubling morphemes to form tags for small creatures cuts across a number of languages in the Grassfields.

9.1 Aghem

The morphological process of reduplication is pervasive in the formation of designations for insect names in Aghem as shown below.

Table 4. Names of small creatures obtained by reduplication in Aghem¹⁰

Singular	Plural	Gloss
í-ká'á ~ ká'á	tí-ká'á ~ ká'á	'grasshoppers'
í-dzəá ~ dzəá	tí-dzəá ~ dzəá	'house flie(s)'
í-kâ: ~ kâ:	tí-kâ: ~ kâ:	'wasp(s)'
í-só'ó ~ só'ó	tí-só'ó ~ só'ó	'wingless termite(s)'
ké-páná ~ páná	ó-páná ~ páná	'mosquito(s)'
ké-lí: ~ lí:	ó-lí: ~ lí:	'caterpillar(s)'
ké-pónó ~ pónó	ó-pónó ~ pónó	'soldier ant(s)'
ké-gónó ~ bvóbvó	ó-gónó ~ bvóbvó	'brown ant(s)'
ké-sáyá ~ sáyá	ó-sáyá ~ sáyá	'rice ant(s)'
gí: ~ gí:	tí-gí: ~ gí:	'spider(s)'
fə-zəá ~ zəá	ñ-zəá ~ zəá	'praying mantis(es)'
fə-zù'ù ~ zù'ù	ñ-zù'ù ~ zù'ù	'fruit flie(s)'
fə-ljà ~ ljà	ñ-ljà ~ ljà	'ant(s)'

Notice that the reduplicated forms above are mostly names of small creatures that come in agglomeration. Still within the Ring group of languages, Kiessling (2010:3) also notes that Isu names some tiny creatures by reduplication as exemplified in (16).

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| (16) | Noun | Gloss |
| a. | kə-yánə ~ yánə | 'tape worm' |
| b. | mən-kwàlè ~ kwàlè | 'hook worms' |
| c. | k ^h í ~ k ^h í | 'wasp' |
| d. | kə-ndzú ~ ndzú | 'toad' |
| e. | kə- dzì ~ dzì | 'fly' |
| f. | sí ~ sí'ə | 'ant' |

9.2 Obang

Reduplication is also very active in some Menchum languages as illustrated by the following data from Obang adapted from Asohsi (2015).

Table 5. Names of small creatures obtained by reduplication in Obang

singular	plural	gloss
é-wúnə ~ wúnə	té-wúnə ~ wúnə	'mosquito(s)'
é-gjə ~ gjə	té-gjə ~ gjə	'houseflie(s)'
é-kúbə ~ kúbə	té-kúbə ~ kúbə	'butterflie(s)'

¹⁰ Many thanks to Tsong Tsonghongel Nelson for providing data on the Aghem language.

é-káná ~ káná	té-káná ~ káná	‘mud wasp(s)’
á-wúló ~ wúló	ó-wúló ~ wúló	‘caterpillar(s)’
á-sógé ~ sógé	ó-sógé ~ sógé	‘palm bird(s)’
á-góṇè ~ góṇè	ó-góṇè ~ góṇè	‘sugar ant(s)’

9.3 Oshie

Momo languages also show aspects of reduplication with total reduplication as the predominant pattern. The following are examples adapted from Stallcup (1978).

Table 6. Names of small creatures obtained by reduplication in Oshie

singular	plural	gloss
ø.pá' ~ pá'	bìá.pá' ~ pá	‘grasshopper(s)’
ù.ṅgā ~ ṅgā	ì.ṅgā ~ ṅgā	‘butterfly(s)’
ì.dzi' ~ dzi'	bì.dzi? ~ dzi'	‘housefly(s)’
ì.mbi ~ mbi	bì.mbi ~ mbi	‘fruit fly(s)’
á.kwèṅ ~ kwèṅ	bìá.kwèṅ ~ kwèṅ	‘millipede(s)’
á.ndêṅ ~ ndêṅ	-----	‘praying mantis(es)’
à.tfwì ~ tfwì	-----	‘caterpillar(s)’

Naming tiny items by reduplication is also noted for Ngie- geographically closer to Oshie. The following are a few examples adapted from Umenjoh (1997:44).

(17)	Noun	Gloss
a.	à.nu ~ nu	‘ant’
b.	à.jì ~ jì	‘fly’
c.	ì.kwèṅ ~ kwèṅ	‘millipede’
d.	ì.dō? ~ dō?	‘toads’

The data on reduplicated nouns presented so far strengthen the fact that there is some regular linguistic relationship between reduplication and the designations for small creatures such as insects and some plants. The tiny creatures that are reduplicated form an important part of the ecological world in which these languages are spoken, and are also tied to indigenous conceptions of culture and nature. Speakers are mostly slash and burn cultivators, hunter-gatherers and fishermen, who are bent on preserving their traditional beliefs and practices. The implication is that there is a constant interaction with the surrounding- the habitat for most of these reduplicated tiny creatures. The landscape is varied with mountain ranges, plateaus covered by grass, plains, volcanic lakes, rivers and wooded valleys, providing a conducive habitat for these little creatures. In these cultures, ideophones transmit animate properties (movement, change over time as well as responsiveness to surroundings), common to both humans and non-humans.

10. Conclusion

Ideophones are commonly used in Bafut but do not constitute a word class of their own. Their ability to evoke sensory frames in the minds of both speakers and listeners is not only for intensification purposes, but also to name some entities. Reduplication plays a pivotal role in the formation of ideophones in this language. This morphological process of doubling words or morphemes has also been demonstrated to be active in the formation of names of small creatures not only in Bafut but across other languages in this region. The labels given to some of these creatures are obtained from the action or sound produced by a referent, or a property of that participant. It has also been demonstrated that while form may suggest or provide possibilities for meaning, it is not always the case. Contrary to ideas that

ideophones are expressive words that occur mostly in spoken language, the data presented here show that even though some ideophones might mimic surrounding sounds, they are not noises but conventional words that designate entities. If ideophones are considered as mere noises or sounds, then one has grossly underestimated and taken for granted the vast efficiency of information packaged in such a sensory world. It is hoped that this description adds to the database on reduplication and ideophones, and equally spurs up further comparative investigation of these phenomena.

Abbreviations

EGB	Eastern Grassfields Bantu	POSS	Possessive
WGB	Western Grassfields Bantu	PERF	Perfect marker
SVO	Subject-verb-object	COP	Copula
1SG	1 st person singular	D2	Distal demonstrative
SM	Subject marker	F0	Simple future tense
IDEO	Ideophone	P2	Yesterday/remote past
Prep	Preposition	CAUS	Causative
Neg	Negation marker	~	Separates reduplicant from base
N	Homorganic nasal	:	Vowel lengthening
PART	Lexical particle	Adj	Adjective

References

- Abubakari, H. (2017). Ideophones in Kusaal, *Journal of West African Languages*. Vol.44-1:42-57.
- Akumbu, P. 2016. Babanki ideophones. *California Linguistic Notes*, 40 (1): 1-15.
- Akumbu, P. & Fogwe, E. 2012. *A pedagogic grammar of Babanki*. Köln: Rüdiger Verlag
- Ameka, F. K. 2001. Ideophones and the nature of the adjective word class in Ewe. In F. k. E. Voeltz and C. Kilian-Hatz (Eds.), *Ideophones*. 25-48. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing company.
- Asohsi, M. 2015. *Structural and typological approaches to Obang grammar*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.
- Ayuninjam, F. F. 1998. *A reference Grammar of Mbili*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Beck, D. 2008. Ideophones, adverbs, and predicate quantification in Upper Necaxa Totonac. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 74(1), 1-46
- Blench, R.2010. The sensory world: ideophones in Africa and elsewhere. In A. Storch (Ed), *Perception of the invisible: Religion, historical semantics and the role of perceptive verbs*. 275-296. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe
- Blench, R. 2013. Mwaghavul expressives. In H. Tourneux (Ed.) *Topics in Chadic Linguistics VII. Papers from the 6th Biennial International Colloquium on the Chadic Languages*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe. (Notes: Villejuif, September 22-23, 2011).
- Bodomo, A. B. 2006. The structure of ideophones in African and Asian languages: The case of Dagaare and Cantonese. In J. M. Mugane., J. P. Hutchison, and A. Dee (Eds), *Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: African languages and linguistics in broad perspectives*. Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Crystal, D. 1997. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*, 4th edition. London: Blackwell
- Dingemanse, M. 2011a. *The Meaning and Use of Ideophones in Siwu*. PhD dissertation. Radboud University Nijmegen.<<http://thesis.ideophone.org/>>
- Dingemanse, M. 2011b. Ezra Pound among the Mawu: Ideophones and iconicity in Siwu. In P. Michelucci, O. Fischer and C. Ljungberg (Eds.), *Semblance and signification*. 39-54. Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Dingemanse, M. 2012. Advances in the cross-linguistic study of ideophones. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 6 (10): 654-672. DOI: 10.1002/Inc3.361.
- Dingemanse, M. 2014. Making new ideophones in Siwu: Creative depiction in conversation. *Pragmatics and Society*, 5 (3), 384-405. DOI: 10.1075/ps.5.3.04din
- Doke, C. M. 1935. *Bantu linguistic terminology*. London: Longmans and Co.
- Fischer, O. & M. Nänny (Eds). 2001. *The motivated sign. Iconicity in language and literature 2*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Haspelmath, M. 2002. *Understanding morphology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, K. D. 2007. *When languages die: The extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Kiessling, R. 2010. Focalization and defocalization in Isu. In I. Fiedler, & A. Schwarz (Eds.), *The expression of information structure: A documentation of its diversity across Africa*. 145-163. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.,
- Mfonyam, J. N.1989. *Tone in orthography: The case of Bafut and related Grassfields Bantu languages*. PhD Dissertation, Yaounde: University of Yaounde.

- Neba, A. N. 2012. Sources of tone assignment to reduplicated forms in Bafut. In P. N. Tamanji & G. Mba (Eds), *Aspects of reduplication in languages of Cameroon & Senegal*. Muenchen: 36-53. LINCOM: Europa.
- Neba, A. N. 2013. Documenting the Bafut (Grassfields Bantu, Cameroon) Royal Honorific System. <http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0271>.
- Newman, P. 2001. Are ideophones really as weird and extra-systematic as linguists make them out to be? In F. K. E. Voeltz, & C. Kilian-Hatz (Eds.), *Ideophones*. 251-258. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nuckolls, J. B. 1992. Sound symbolism involvement. *Journal of Linguistics Anthropology* 2:51-80.
- Nuckolls, J. B. 1995. Quechua texts of perception. *Semiotica*. 103 (1/2):145-169. DOI: 10.1515/semi.1995.103.1-2.145.
- Nuckolls, J. B. 1996. *Sounds like life: Sound-symbolic grammar, performance, and cognition in Pastaza Quechua*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peirce, C. S. (1932). *Collected Writings, 2: Elements of Logic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Reiter, S. 2011. Ideophones in Aweti. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Kiel
- Schwaiger, T. 2013. On the structure of reduplicants: Iconicity and preferred form in Reduplication. In N. Hathout, F. Montemini & J. Tseng (Eds.), *Morphology in Toulouse: Selected Proceedings of Décembrettes 7*, 211-229. München: LINCOM Europa.
- Stallcup, K. L. 1978. *A comparative perspective on the phonology and noun classification of three Cameroon Grassfields Bantu languages: Moghamo, Ngie, & Oshie*. Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University.
- Stolz, T., Stroh, C. & Urdze, A. 2011. *Total reduplication: The areal linguistics of potential universal*. Oldenbourg: Akademie Verlag. DOI: 10.1524/9783050050973.
- Tamanji, N. P. 2009. *A Descriptive grammar of Bafut*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Tamanji, N. P. 2012. Reduplication, word categories and sentence structure in Bafut. In P. N. Tamanji & G. Mba (Eds), *Aspects of reduplication in languages of Cameroon & Senegal*. 72-88. Muenchen: LINCOM: Europa.
- Trask, R. L. 1993. *A dictionary of grammatical terms in Linguistics*. London: Routledge
- Umenjoh, F. A. 1997. Reduplication in Ngie. M.A thesis. University of Yaounde 1.
- Voeltz, F. K. E & Kilian-Hatz, C. 2001. *Ideophones*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Watters, J. R. 2003. Grassfields Bantu. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (Eds.), *The Bantu languages*, 225-256. London: Routledge.
- Westermann, D. H. 1930. *A study of the Ewe language*. Lewis Bickford-Smith. London: Oxford University Press.

Appendix: List of ideophones and their semantic concepts

Ideophone	Meaning
bá'á bá'á	'boiling/pounding with anger' (mostly referred to the heart)
bjàgə	'onomatope for the sound of a sticky substance landing on the ground (saliva)'
bàgəbàgə	'onomatope for bubbling noise made by water or any other liquid when being boiled'
bibibi	'sound for fast dripping of liquid (mostly sweat, tears etc)'
bwà'á bwà'á	'ideophone for being watery (as of soup)'
bjàgə bjàgə	'ideophone for a cross sign (X)'
búú	'ideophone for being bright, white, pale, gray, very clean'
bùù	'ideophone for the sound of a heavy downpour (waterfall)'
bòò	'ideophone for being scarlet red'
bìì	'ideophone for being very hot (as of fire)'
dòṅdòṅ	'ideophone for being long and thin'
dzíṅ dzíṅ	'a very loud jingling noise as of anklets'
dʒwán dʒwán	'ideophone for being empty'
fù:m	'ideophone for a sudden expelled breath of relief'
bà'á bà'á	'ideophone for the act of shivering with cold, boiling with anger'
hòhòhò	'onomatope for the sound of snoring'
kwákwá	'sound of laughter'
Kwákwá'	'sound of of knocking on the door'
kwán kwán	'sound of nailing on the roof; a rowdy disagreement'
kàtə kàtə	'ideophone for a quick strong walk'
kwè'è kwè'è	'onomatope for Sound of gulping water'
kón	'ideophone for being very hard like a rock'
yá'yá'	'sound for movement of leg (especially masquerades)'
yón	'ideophone for being dead silent (like a grave yard)'
lèè	'ideophone for the silent flow of liquid'
lélélé	'onomatope for an ululating sound'
lónki lónki	'ideophone for being lanky and without strength'
mé'é	'onomatope for the sound of bleating'

m̀bimbì'ì	'type of popping grass'
ǹomǹom	'ideophone for being very soft; over-softness'
náfó'ó náfó'ó	'ideophone for being fat and healthy (used to describe root and tuber crops)'
ḡwàn/	'ideophone for a flash of light'
ḡááḡáá	'ideophone for the sound of a cry or scream of an infant'
ḡkwán ḡkwán	'onomatope for the sound of a bell'
ḡiì	'humming or buzzing sound (as of flies, bees etc)'
swìḡàswìḡà	'onomatope for a wiggling sound (eg from a broken chair)'
swì'ìkì swì'ìkì	'ideophone for being pale and unhealthy'
swàn	'ideophone for haste, quickness, promptness'
swíí	'ideophone for being very quiet (mostly used with humans)'
tsín	'ideophone for being pitch black'
tsíḡí	'ideophone for being very bitter'
tíún	'ideophone for stinking'
tòrì tòrì	'onomatope for a crunchy sound (chewing kola nut)'
tsàḡàtsàḡà	'ideophone for being extremely soft and watery'
tíwàḡà tíwàḡà	'onomatope for the sound of chewing voraciously like a pig'
tè'ètè'è	'onomatope for the sound of raindrops hitting the ground'
tèè	'onomatope for the sound of a free-flowing liquid pouring on the ground'
tséé	'ideophone for being very clean, crystal clear'
twààtwàà	'HIV/AIDS (from the sound of a running stomach)'
tswí'ì	'ideophone for looking fresh and wealthy'
tsùtsù	'waterfall (sound from heavy down pour of water)'
tsò'òtsò'ò	'ideophone for being weak and tired'
tíwìtè tíwìtè	'ideophone for being tasteless'
tíwíí tíwíí	'onomatope for the sound of a whistle'
tíúm	'sound of diving or falling into water'
túḡítúḡí	'motorcycle (comes from the sound it makes)'
wùù	'ideophone for flaming/blazing strongly and continuously'
wù	'ideophone for a sudden blaze (as of fire)'
wémééé	'ideophone for a loud uproarious complaint with wailing; surprise (which could be pleasant or unpleasant)'
wébébébé	'ideophone for a bewildered cry (expressing surprise/, shock)'
wùwù	'ideophone for the sound of a dog barking'
wà'á	'ideophone for a sudden appearance'
wúúhù wúúhù	'onomatope for the sound made by a royal messenger to attract attention'
wé'èwé'è	'ideophone for not being sticky (as of puree)'
wé'èkìwé'èkì	'ideophone for weakness; emptiness; dizziness'
wààwàà	'onomatope for the sound of moving in dry grass/leaves'
jà	'ideophone for a bewildered sigh'
jòrì jòrì	'onomatope for the sound of breathing with obstruction'