THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND
LINGUISTICS

YAMBA :
A MORPHOSYNTACTIC
STUDY OF THE BASIC
SENTENCE

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(MAITRISE) in General Linguistics

By

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DEDICATION

To

Jikong Carl, my husband,

to Jikong Brayant and Jikong Carla our

children.

To

Dr. Ogwana John and Ogwana Thérèse

Dr. Jikong Stephen and Jikong Christina our

parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been the collective effort of many people to whom I am greatly indebted.

My special thanks go to Dr. Tamanji Pius, my supervisor, for giving invaluable suggestions that have given this work its present shape.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Ogwana John for giving invaluable suggestions and for his material and moral support.

Individual help was not also negligible. Priority goes to Dr. Stephen Y. Jikong, Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Yaounde I.

My thanks also go to Viban Bernard, the typist, for his patience and accurate work.

Finally, I thank all those who have contributed in one way or the other in bringing this work to its present stage.

However, any flaw in the dissertation should be attributed to me.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

Adj	Qualifying Adjective
ag	Agent
ben	Beneficiary recipient
Cl	Class
D	Determiner
Dem	Demonstrative adjective
Desc	Description
Fig	Figure
H	Head
It	Item
Loc	Locative
M	Measure or Evaluation
N	Noun
NP	Noun Phrase
NP$_1$	Grammatical subject of the sentence
NP$_2$	First Complement of the verb
NP$_3$	Second Complement of the verb
Pl m	Plural morpheme
Num	Numerals
Pl	Plural
Poss	Possessive Adjective
Prep	Preposition
Pt	Patient
Q	Qualifier
Sing	Singular
V	Verb
Vbe	State verb
Vimp	Impersonal verb
Vi	Intransitive Verb
Vt	Transitive verb
Vtt	Ditransitive verb
Ø	Absence of an element
:	Sign of formal and semantic correlation in Case Grammar

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim and Significance of Study

This study has been inspired by both immediate and long term objectives which are academic, scientific and political.

Our most immediate objectives are scientific. The very first thing any learner of linguistics has to discover is the very complex nature of language - of any language. He is given a list of features that any language must manifest. He is told for example that, amongst others, language is primarily vocal, must manifest duality of patterning, discreteness and structure. He is told that while each language is unique all languages are similar. All this boils down to one thing. Any language utterance can be broken down into successively small units from the largest, the sentence, down to the smallest, the phoneme. These units can be identified and given labels corresponding to the various levels and ranks of analysis. There must be implicit rules which govern the way smaller units are combined to form larger ones. The discovery of such rules is what we may broadly call morphosyntax.

The morphosyntactic study of a language is scientifically and academically very exciting for any student aspiring to become a linguist and I think Yamba deserves this scientific attention.

The scientific objective of this study is therefore to describe the morphosyntax of Yamba in order to determine how Yamba is morphosyntactically unique and yet morphosyntactically similar to other languages that have been studied before.

The long-term objectives of this study are closely linked to the significance of the study both from a personal and political point of view.

From a political standpoint, it is the explicit policy of the government that Cameroonian children should receive their primary school education in their respective mother languages. The problem here is that, due to negative attitudes, the study and writing of Cameroonian languages was neglected in favour of the colonial languages. Hence, before this policy can be put into effect linguists must get down to study these various languages and create relevant didactic material to be used in the schools.A morphosyntactic study of Yamba constitutes a major step towards the description of the language and eventual creation of relevant didactic material.

From a personal standpoint, some of us the non-native speakers of Yamba, are through social constraints, called upon to intergrate into the Yamba community. We think the study of this language analytically may help us to understand the Yamba community better; a language is a very conspicuous "identity card" of its speakers.

1.2 Geographical Situation of Yamba.

Yamba is a language spoken by the people of the Nwa Sub-Division in the Donga - Mantung Division. The above area is situated in the North West Province of the Republic of Cameroon, which is found in Central Africa. (See maps 1 and 2 in pages 3 and 4).

N

AFRICA

CAMEROON

0   300KM
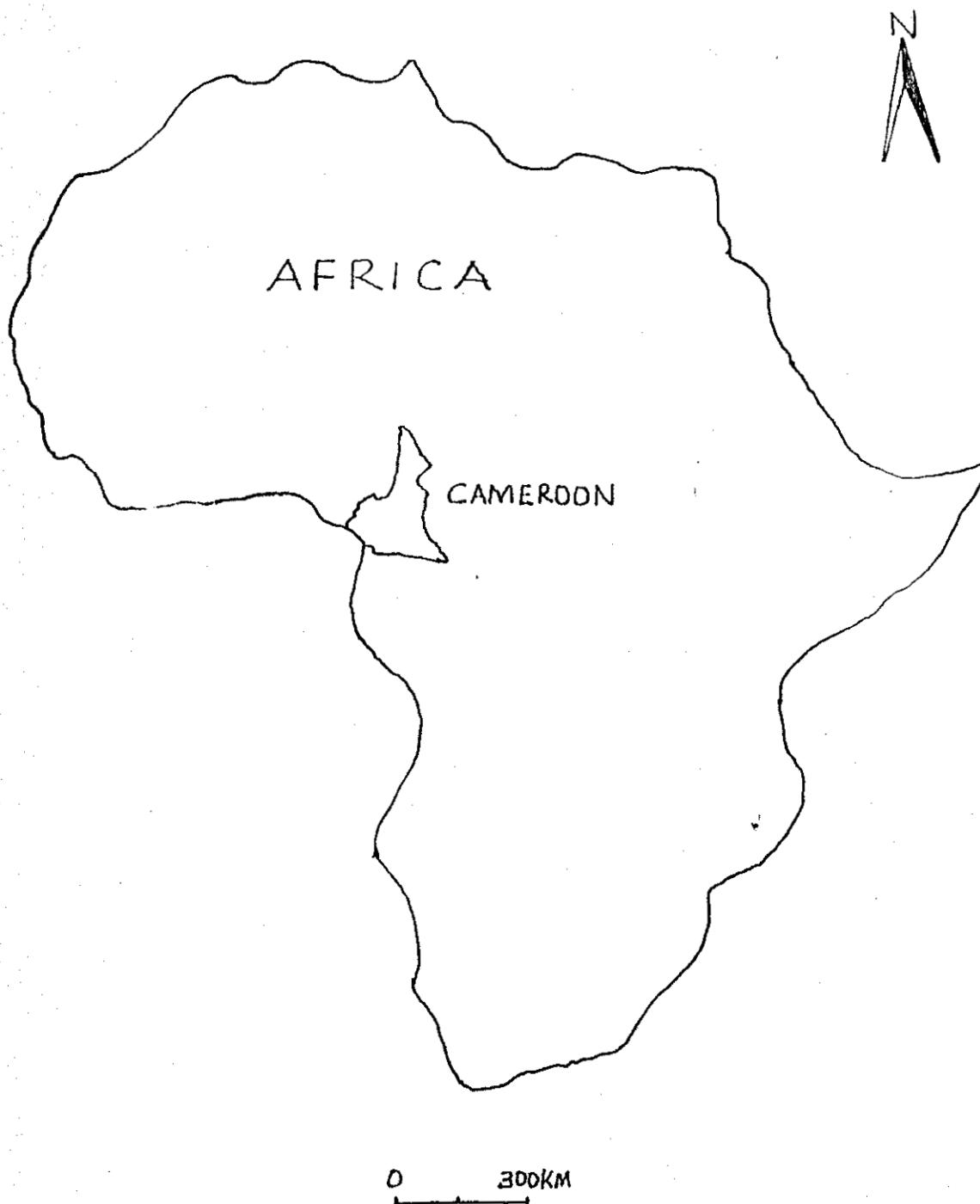
LOCATING DONGA-MANTUNG DIVISION IN NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON.

MAP 2:

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

NIGERIA

N

⊙ AKO

◎ NKAMBE

• BINSHUA
• BINKA

NKANCHI
TABENKEN
• MBOT

WATT
• TALLA
• NGARUM

• NDU
NTUNDIP

MENCHUM

LUS
SAAM •
KWAJA •

NTONG •

SIH •

• GOM
• MFE
YANG

⊙ NWA

• MBEM

• NTEM

MAYO-BANYO

BUI

N O U N
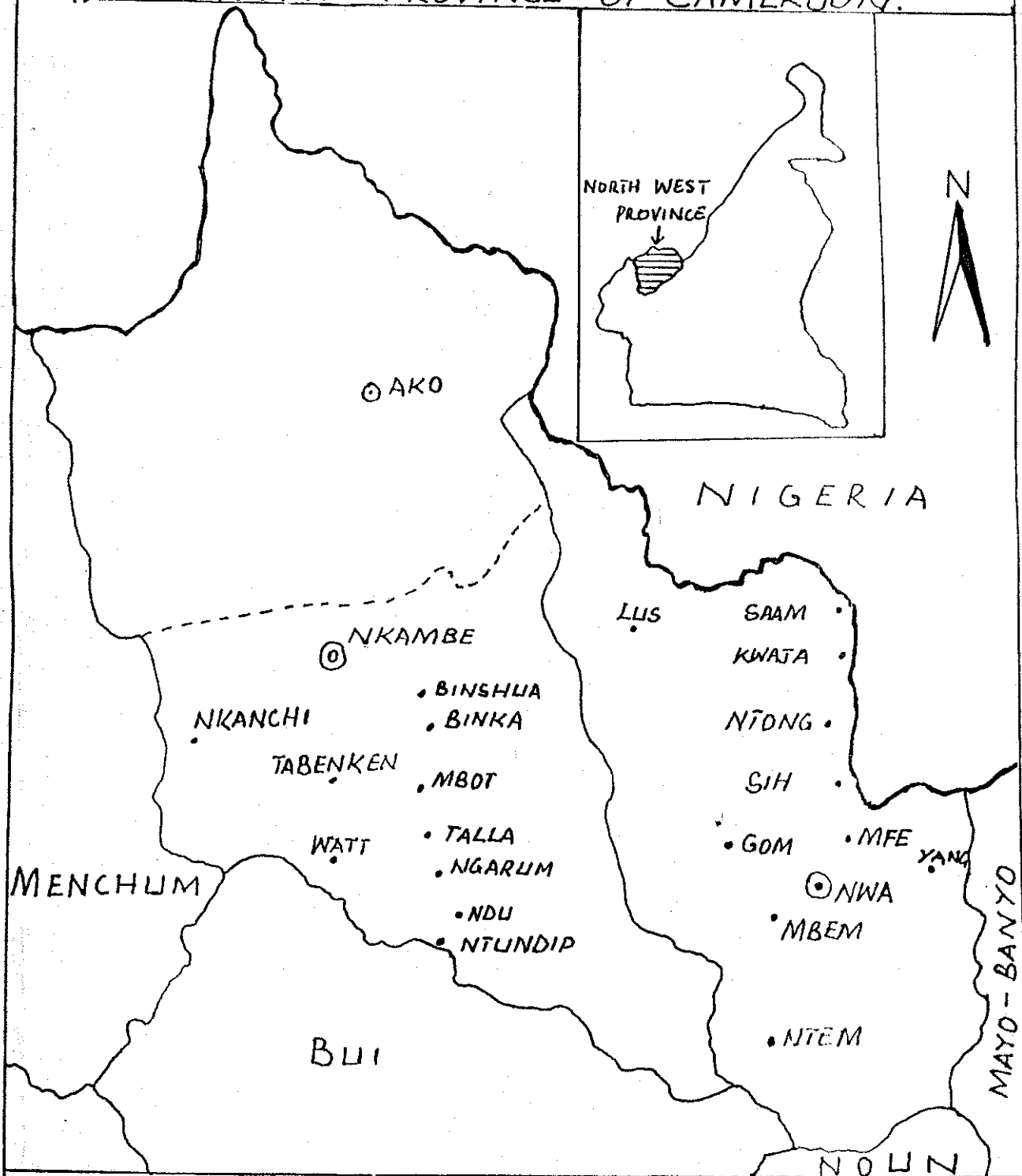
◎	DIVISIONAL CHIEF TOWN	•	CHIEFDOM
⊙	SUBDIVISIONAL CHIEF TOWN	— — —	DISTRICT BOUNDARY
⊙	DISTRICT CHIEF TOWN		SUBDIVISIONAL BOUNDARY
			NATIONAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM ALCAM - 1987 : 138

THE LOCATION OF YAMBA AND ITS
Map 3: NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES.

N I G E R I A

N

DZODINKA

• LUS

• SAAM

MFUMTE

• NTIM

• NTONG

• KOFFA

• NGUNG

• FAM

• MBAT

• NDUMIJADJ

• KWAK

• SIH

⊙ NKAMBE

• BOM

• MFE

• GOM

WIMBUM

o NWA

MAMBILA

• NKOT

YAMBA

• MBEM

• SAB

• SAM

Riom •

MBAW

CHIEFDOM

SUBDIVISIONAL BOUNDARY.

• GAMFE

DIVISIONAL CHIEF TOWN.

• GWEMBE

TIKARI

SUBDIVISIONAL CHIEF TOWN.
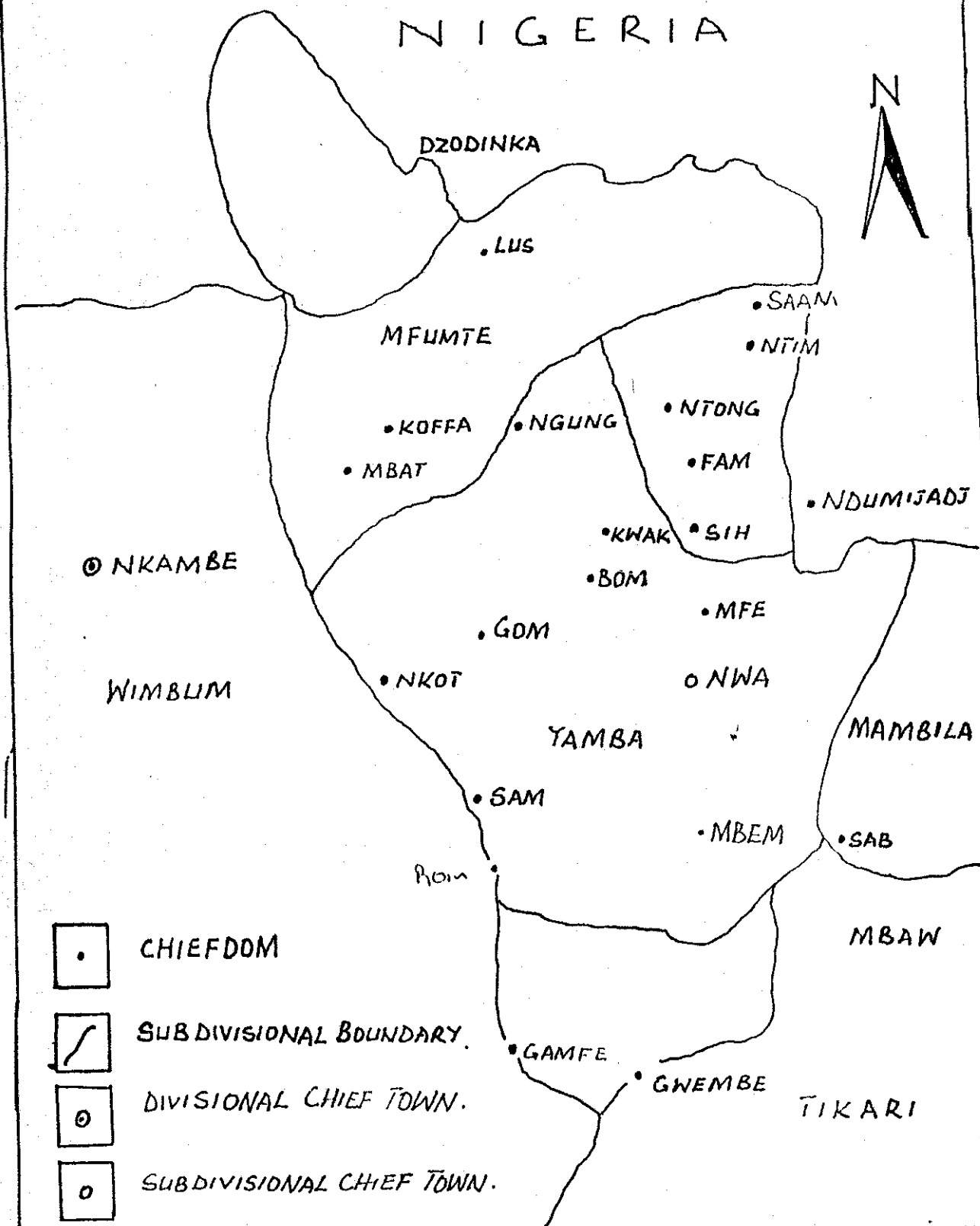
SOURCE : ADAPTED FROM ALCAM - 1989.

Map 4: LANGUAGE DIVISIONS IN AFRICA

N

☰ (horizontal lines)	AFRO ASIATIC
☰ (lines)	NILO SAHARAN
⊡ (dots)	NIGER-KORDOFANIAN
⊞ (grid with dots)	KHOISAN

0   300KM
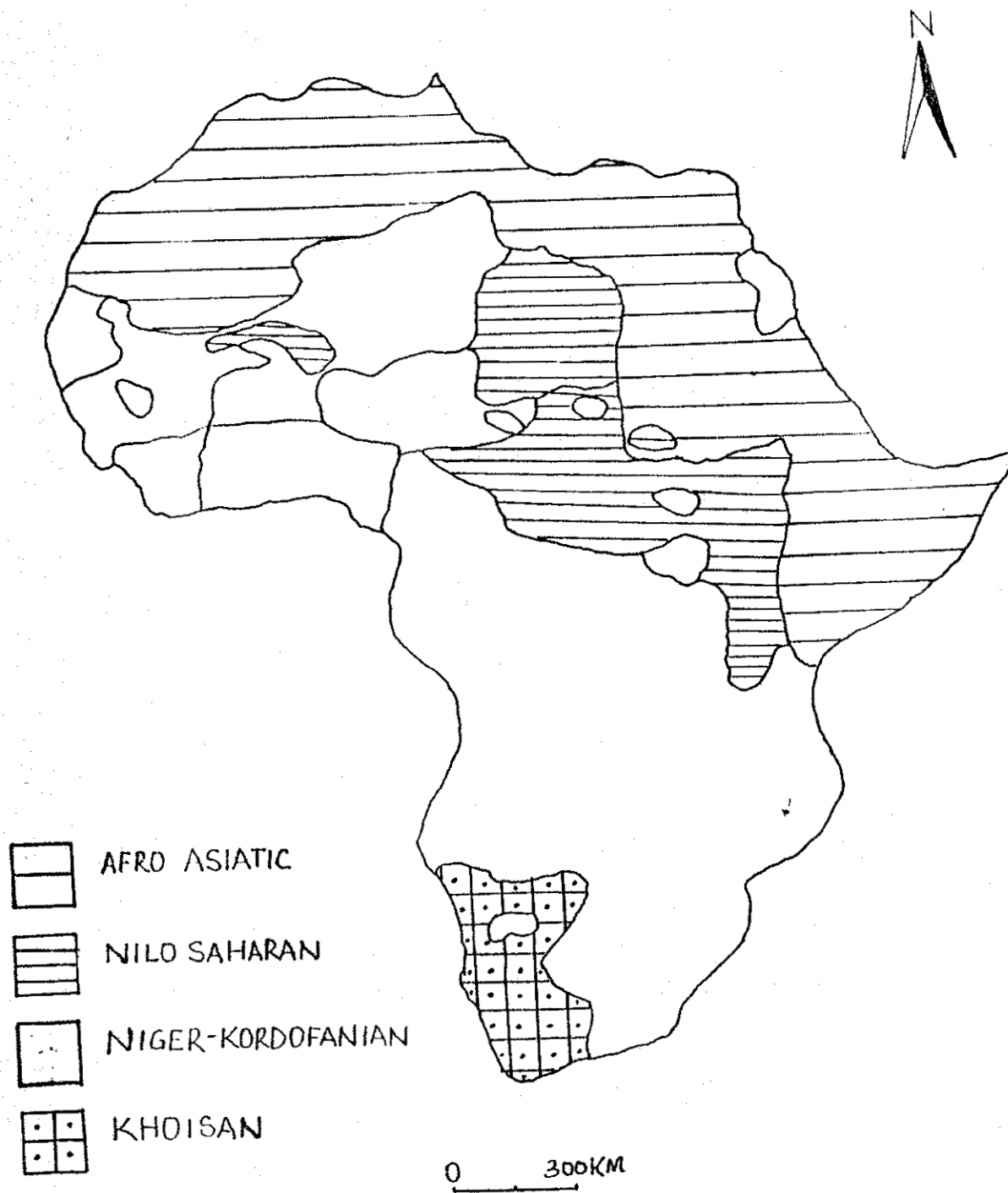
Map 5   MAJOR LANGUAGE ZONES   CAMEROON

N

Legend:

- AFRO-ASIATIC.
- NILO-SAHARIAN.
- NIGER-CONGO.
- BANTU LINE.

0   300KM

BANTU IN THE
BROAD SENSE

BANTOID
NON-BANTU
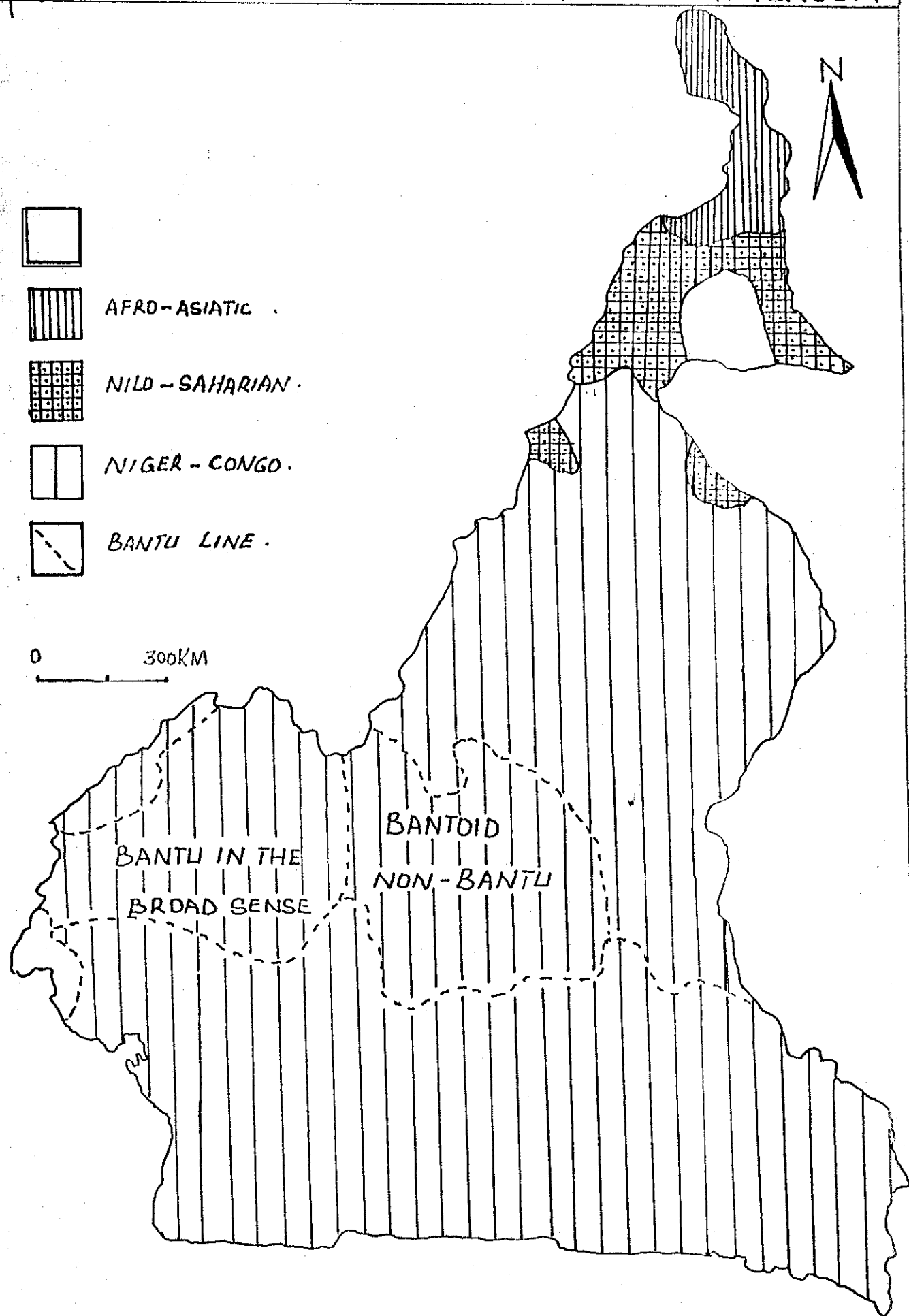
SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM ALCAM - 1983.

1.3   Linguistic Classification of Yamba

Greenberg (1955) classifies African languages into four large linguistic families; namely: the Niger Kordofanian, the Nilo Saharan, the Afro Asiatic and the Khoisan. Only the first three are represented in Cameroon, with the Niger-Kordofanian family being the most largely represented; (map 4 page 6), (map 5 page 7).

As can be seen from maps 2 and 3, pages 4 and 5, Yamba is situated in the Nwa Sub-Division Donga Mantung Division, in the North West Province of the Republic of Cameroon and as can be seen from map 3 page 5, Yamba shares boundaries with a number of villages speaking different languages. Hence we have Mfumte to the North West, the Mambila to the North East, the Mbaw to the South and the Wimbum to the West and South West.

Williamson (1971) classifies Yamba as a member of the grassfield Bantu sub group. The twelve languages below are listed in the sub-group:

1	Shʉ pamən	6	bamunka
2	ghɔ́mǎlạ	7	lamnso
3	mungaka	8	limbum
4	beba –befang	9	kemezung
	5-ngemba	10	kaka =Yamba
		11	mfumte

According to ALCAM, there are more than 10,000 speakers of Yamba today and it has been placed in zone 9 in ALCAM with its code number being 906.

The Tree Diagram below shows the language family to which Yamba belongs.

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Fig. 1: Yamba within the Niger- Kordofanian family tree
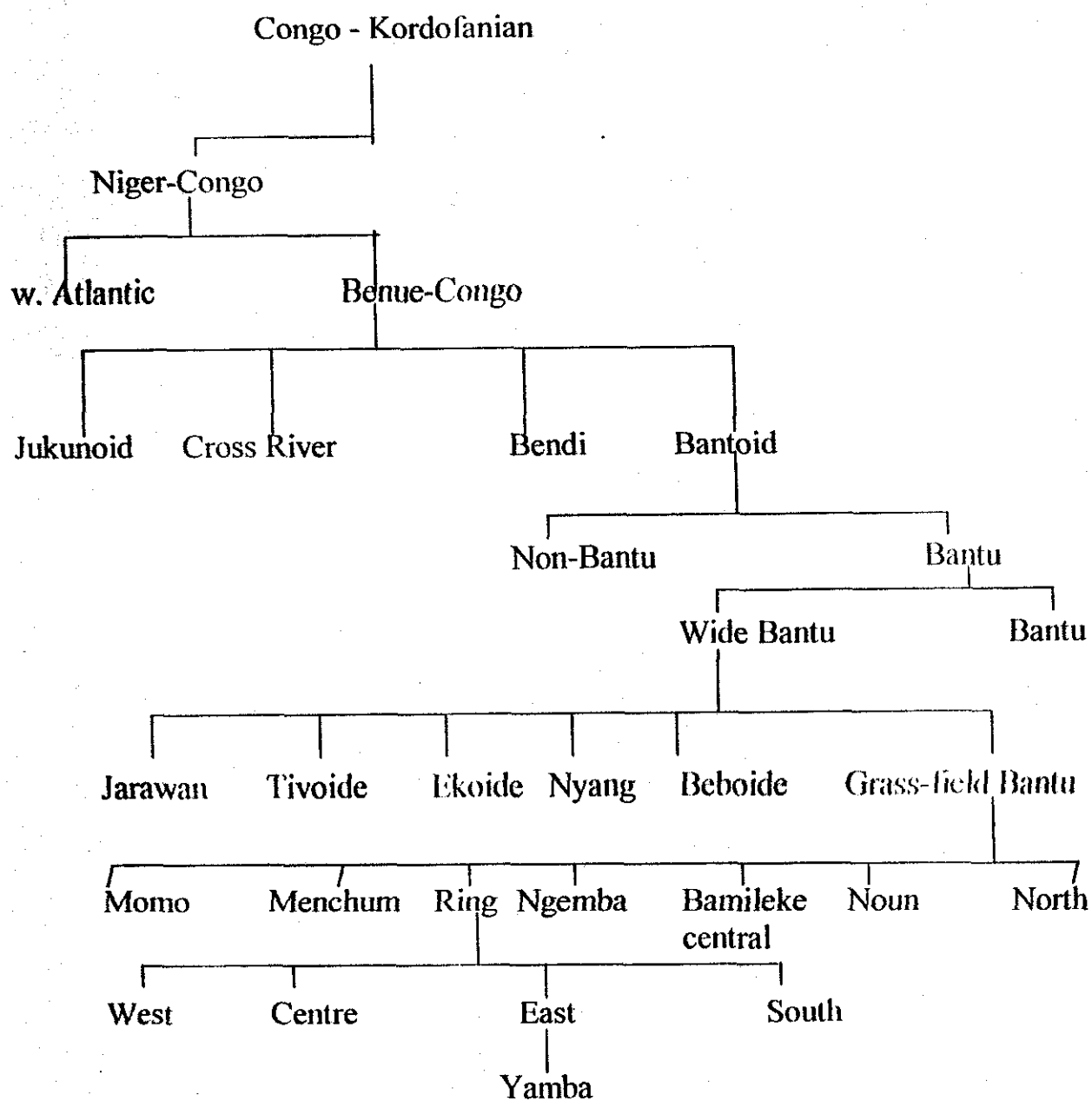
Adapted from ALCAM (1983)

Yamba Dialects:

As can be seen from the map fig 3, Yamba is divided into ten dialects: Gwembə, Gamfe, Mbem, Sam, Bom, Fam, Ngung, Saam, Nkot and Sih. Since research is going on in this domain, we cannot give the exact number of the dialects.

Our study is concentrated on the dialects from which we have found willing informants. However, since our study is a morphosyntactic study, there is likely to be very little difference, if any, when one moves from one dialect to another. Most variations within are either phonetic or lexical and not grammatical.

1.4 Historical, Geographical and Sociological Background

1.4.1 Brief history of the Yamba

The Yamba are believed to have originated from the Tikars who claim their origin from various places such as Tibati, Banyo, Ndobo and Kimi all in the northern part of Cameroon.

The tribe we now call Yamba was formerly called 'kaka'. It is worth mentioning that the name 'kaka' may have originated from two ideas; first, it designates a compound of dried stems of tall grass 'ka' and we find this same appellation within the neighbouring tribes: Wimbum, Mfumte and Mbaw. This grass was used as torches in the former days ; and even today, one may find them in the houses of those families unable to afford a bush lamp. Thus, the term 'kaka' can be said to have originated from the above stem.

Secondly, as a result of the slave raids carried out by the Fulani on the Yamba people, during the 'Jihads' the Fulani who were Moslems, tried to convert the non-Islamic tribes by force but the Yamba people, who were among those tribes resisted Islam. They became as a result, victims of the raids in which they were either taken as slaves or killed. The Fulanis were always victorious and the

Yamba people always ended up in capitulation and waved their hands shouting 'ka', 'ka', 'ka', meaning 'no', 'no', 'no'.

The Fulanis then nicknamed the tribe 'kaka' because of the constant repetition of this word 'ka'. The name thereafter was adopted even by the administration in reference to the tribe.

The name 'kaka' was later changed because it reminded the people of their days of slavery. It had a pejorative connotation and they looked for a more positive name for their tribe. Hence, "Yamba" was chosen as the name of this Tikar group of people. However up to 1982 we may still find the appellation 'kaka' in some research works.

'Yamba' is a word used to call attention, especially in south of Yamba. It is also worth mentioning that in Ndumyaji , a village across the border between Nigeria and Cameroon , the other Tikar group found on the Nigerian side still call themselves 'Kaka' to differentiate from the Yamba people on the Cameroonian side, though they are still the same people and of the same origin.

1.4.2 Topography, Vegetation and Climate.

Yambaland is made up mainly of crystalline rocks while the southern part of this plateau has rich soils because of its volcanic lakes. The territory has many sharp rocky peaks full of caves and ravines except for Saam (less peaks). Each of these peaks is separated from the other by deep narrow valleys.

Such peaks as the Rom Rock gave a lot of difficulties to strangers who tried to penetrate the area by road. They equally served as hiding places for the Yamba people during the slave raids.

However, progress has been made today and cars can now reach Yambaland without much difficulty. Roads actually link up the different villages of the Yamba.

Vegetation here is characterized by the Sudan Savanna because of reduction in rainfall northwards. It is grassland and full of shrubs which shed off

their leaves in the dry season; this type of vegetation provides good pasture for cattle (tall grass). The raffia palm bushes are limited to the valleys and provide palm wine, which is used in all ceremonies.

Yambaland is characterized by two seasons: the rainy season which lasts from March to September and the dry season, which lasts from October to March.

During the rainy season, the Southwest winds, warm wet winds, blow from St. Helen in the Atlantic Ocean and bring along with them warm and wet conditions.

The atmospheric humidity is low during the dry season and vegetation turns brown. Small streams dry up while rivers reduce in volume. The effects of the harmattan are seriously felt and this makes cultivation possible only during the rainy season.

1.4.3. Occupation

The people are mainly peasant farmers. Farming here is done mainly on a subsistent basis. This is due to poor soils and the fact that cultivation is done only in the rainy season.

Both men and women are involved in farming. They produce maize, yams, coco yams, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, plantains, local carrots and sugar cane along-side the river valleys. Guinea corn and millet are grown along the gentle slopes. Palm trees are mostly found in Gom, Nkot, Ngung, Saam, Bom, Kwack and Ngang, along the gentle slopes and river valleys.

Vegetables like cabbages and cowpeas are also grown. Arabica coffee was introduced in 1950 and is the only cash crop cultivated till today.

Men hunt either in groups or individually with the help of spears, guns, cutlasses, knives, nets, clubs and traps.

The Fulani introduced cattle as well as sheep.

1.5 · Literature Review.

1.5.1 On Yamba phonology and orthography.

The normal initial step in the linguistic description of any "new language" is the description of the phonological system.

Scruggs (1980) carried out research on Yamba segmental phonology. According to her findings, Yamba makes use of the following consonants represented on the tables I and II respectively.

Table 1:   Yamba Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio dental	Dental alveolar	prepalatal	palatal	velar	glottal	Labio Velar
Stops	P b		t d			k g	?	kp gb
Nasals	m		n		ɬ	ŋ		
Fricatives			s z	ʃ ʒ		x γ	h	
Affricates			ts dz	ç ɟ				
Lateral			l					
Trills			r					
Vibrant								
Glides					j			w

Table 2:   Yamba Vowels

Front -Round	Central -Round + Round	Back + Round
High i	ɨ ʉ	u
Half High e	(uə)	o
Half Low ɛ	ə	ɔ
low	a ɑ	

Bradley (1991) came out with a Yamba alphabet and orthographic system. This alphabet was composed of 37 consonant graphemes and 09 vowel graphemes. (see tables below),. According to this orthographic system most words are monosyllabic since most grammatical morphemes such as tense, aspect, location, pronouns and so on, are written as autonomous units. This orthographic system includes tones of which she indicates five: [´ ` ¯ ˇ ˆ] .

Bradley (1991) tried to study the dialect situation of Yamba and came out with a sort of descriptive grammar of the language. She admits that much more work needs to be done in order to standardise the language and determine the marking of tones. Actually, she leaves many tones unmarked, because she feels more research is required on tones in Yamba.

Table 3:   Yamba Consonant Graphemes.

Phoneme	Grapheme	Example	
/ P /	P	Pwē¹	"all"
/ b /	b	bwē¹	"to light fire"
/ f /	f	fúk	"fish"
/ v /	v	vèke¹	"nine"
/ t /	t	tàm	"trap"
/ ʔ /	¹	çi¹	"salt"
/ d /	d	dù	"go"
/ s /	s	swîs	"pepper"
/ z /	z	zú	"to eat"
/ ts /	ts	tsēn	"to meet"
/ dz /	dz	dzē	"kola nuts"
/ ç /	ç	çi¹	"salt"
/ ɲ /	ɲ̃	jòk	"be angry"
/ k /	k	kòŋ	"spear"
/ g /	g	gòm	"balance"
/ r /	r	ràm	"shout"
/ h /	h	húm	"ten"
/ kp /	kp	kpwís	"cough"
/ gb /	gb	gbū	"fall"
/ l /	l	lìn	"name"

/ r /	r	rùk	"palm wine"
/ w /	w	wáŋ	"to cry"
/ j /	j	jùŋ	"to be sick"
/ m /	m	mbàp	"rat"
/ n /	n	ńçʔú	"door"
/ ŋ /	ŋ	ŋ̀kì	"song"

Table 4:   Yamba Vowel Graphemes

Phoneme	Grapheme	Example	
/ i /	i	tĩp	"advise"
/ e /	e	tē	"pick up"
/ ε /	ε	tέ'	"three"
/ a /	a	mā	"mother"
/ ə /	ə	tə̄m	"shoot" (with spear)
/ ʉ /	ʉ	tú	"tree", "stick"
/ u /	u	tú	"head"
/ o /	o	tó	"to call"
/ ɔ /	ɔ	mòŋwànē	"the girl"

Table 5 : Yamba Tones

Tone	Word	
/ ′ /	nzúm	"farm"
/ ¯ /	nūm	"moon"
/ ` /	tàsà	" pot"
/ ˇ /	ně	"this"
/ ^ /	ntônvép	"cock"

Table 6:   Yamba Syllable Types

- V
CV
CCV
CCVC
CVC
CCCV

Examples

a) V:

   à   " Past tense marker"

b)   CV

tó   "call"
fò   "where"
tú   "tree"
mù   "I"
tɛ'   "father"
bə̀   "with"

c)   C C V

ŋwè   "person"
nté'   "market"

d)   CCVC

mbòŋ   "cow"
ndáp   "house"
ntĭp   "advice"
mvə́p   "chicken"
ŋkúm   "chief"

e)   CVC

gòm   "banana"
júk   "hear"
və́p   "bone"
típ   "advise
lís   "Stone"

1.5.2. Other Aspects of Yamba

Other works related to Yamba include Jikong (1979). Sacred Language among the Yamba.

Buinda (1987) in his work The Socio-cultural and Political Institutions of Yamba , has also talked a lot about the history and origins of the Yamba people as well as their entire culture. He brings out facts which prove that Yamba

fondoms are independent and not part of Nso or Wimbum areas as it was thought before. He equally shows the importance of the Yamba community in the North West Province of Cameroon. Nnovethan Langwa and John Nangong with the help of the Yamba language committee have written a book on learning to read and write the Yamba language. Menyong Timothy Ndutuih in his dissertation has taught us a lot on the traditional beliefs of the Tikars of the Mbaw plain.

As to works in Yamba the most well known example is that of the Bible which has been translated with the aid of the SIL and by the Yamba Language Committee.

1.6   Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Choice of Basic Utterance

During our study, we shall use the axiom that all linguistic communication can be reduced to four basic utterances which are: declarative utterances, interrogative utterances, imperative utterances, and exclamation utterances.

By convention, the declarative utterance tends to be the most explicit, the least complex and the easiest to analyse. It is therefore usually presented as the unmarked form of utterance. Consequently, the other utterance types tend to be considered as transformations of the declarative utterance.

We are not here to question or support this conventional practice. We are simply going to adopt it because it is easy to apply. Hence throughout this study most examples will be those of declarative utterances.

1.6.2.   The Case Grammar Model

1.6.2.1   Definition of Case Grammar

Case grammar was introduced by Charles Fillmore but was developed and applied by other linguists such as Longacre (1976; 23-37) who helped to explain this theory. The linguists of this school were motivated by the conviction that a linguistic unit such as verbal sentence manifests not only surface structure

relationships but also deep structure relationship among its constituents. Thus for the analysis of a sentence to be satisfactory, the analysis should be based on a formal parameter which takes into account surface structure elements (structural linguistics) and a notional parameter which looks at the deep structure relationships (generative approach).

From the point of view of Dubois et al (1973); in case grammar, the initial symbol sentence (Σ)develops into a sequence made up of the Modality (Mod) and a Proposition (Prop). The first constituent (Mod) may represent such elements as declaration, negation, mood, tense, aspect and so on. The second constituent (Prop) is made up of the verb and a series of arguments (nouns = C).
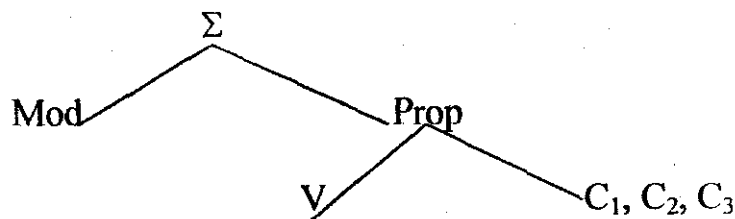
$\Sigma \longrightarrow$ Mod + Prop

Prop $\longrightarrow$ V + C_1... C_n

The verb in this model is the central element of the sentence. This is because, it is from the verb that, (in deep structure) we define or determine the various case relationships. Then also most modalities such as tense, mood, aspect, voice and negation are directly or indirectly associated with the verb.

1.6.2.2   Inventory and Definition of Cases

Longacre points out that one shall likely never be able to come out with a uniform inventory of cases. Theoretically, there are over twenty possible cases but a case becomes interesting only when a deep structure element provokes a surface structure manifestation.

The inventory of cases seems to vary from linguist to linguist because of their tendency to retain only the few cases that have surface structure indices in the language under study.

Longacre recognises 10 cases which are 1. Agent (ag), 2. Experiencer (ex), 3. Patient(pt), 4. Range (r.), 5. (Measure (m.), 6. Instrument (instr.), 7. Locative (loc.), 8. Source (S.), 9. Goal (gl.) and path (path). Other linguists WIESEMANN and NSEME (1984) have added two frequent cases; item (it.) and description (desc.)

Some of these cases overlap while others include other cases, hence creating a problem as regards inventory. The cases of Agent and Experiencer are found to have no distinction for some linguists; for many linguists, Experiencer and Patient are one, and yet for other linguists again, Agent, Experiencer and Item are not obvious; for most linguists, the Locative case seems to include Source, Goal and Path. In several languages it is difficult to distinguish between Range and Measure.

Concrete Examples of Case Identification

We are going to work with an Inventory of 8 cases because they are indispensable for the syntactic description of the basic sentences in the languages we are likely to meet in the course of study. The other cases are likely to occur in derived or extended sentences which we shall reserve for later studies.

The 8 basic cases and their examples.

1.   Agent : ag
An animate or inanimate entity which instigates a process or which acts.

Examples:
NP: ag
1   The boy runs

NP: ag

2   All the children sing

        NP: ag

3   My dog barks.

2.   Experiencer (ex.)
An animate entity which <u>initiates and undergoes</u> a process.

        NP: ex.

4.   The boy sees a film.

        NP: ex.

5.   That girl hates music.

3.   Patient (pt.)
An animate or inanimate entity which undergoes the action expressed by the verb

        NP: pt.

6   The boy hits the dog.

        NP : pt

7.   The child opens the door.

4.   Locative Beneficiary (loc.)
An entity, animate or inanimate, which is associated with the action or situation expressed by the verb.

        NP: loc.

8   The boys goes to school.

        NP : loc

9.   The child is in the house.

5.   Beneficiary Recipient (ben.)
An animate entity towards which the action expressed by the verb is directed.

        NP: ben

10   The boy gives a book to his teacher.

        NP: ben

11   The child speaks to his mother.

6.   Measure (m.)

An inanimate entity that indicates the quantity, rate, evaluation expressed by the verb.

NP: m.

12   This book costs <u>ten francs</u>.
13   The boy weighs <u>fifty kilos</u>
14   The girl walks <u>2 miles</u>.
15   The woman dances <u>Tájòk</u>

7.   Item (it.) An animate entity that is referred to.
        Ex:

NP1:   +   Vbe   +   NP2 :desc
This fish   is   nice   food

8.   Description (desc.)

In the case of state verbs, "to be", the sentence is composed of two other elements, subject and non-verbal part of the predication or complement. The subject entity is referred to as the "item", whereas the complement entity is referred to as the "description".

NP_1 : it +Vbe + NP_2: desc.
16   <u>This fish</u> is   <u>nice food</u>.

NP_1: it +Vbe + NP_2: desc.
17   <u>This boy</u> is <u>a thief</u>.

NP_1: it +Vbe + NP_1: desc.
18   <u>The women</u> become <u>lazy</u>.

1.6.2.3. Verbal sub Categorisation in Case Grammar

Since it was mentioned earlier that the verb was the main element in any basic sentence, it is useful to talk about the various types of verbs, the classification having been elaborated on the basis of syntactic criteria.

Verbs are divided into two main groups: verbs of action (V.act.) and verbs of state (Vbe).

The verbs of action are further subdivided into two groups: impersonal (V. imp.) and personal verbs. The Personal verbs are then divided into Intransitive Verbs (Vi) and transitive verbs. The transitive verbs are finally divided into simple transitive (Vt) and ditransitive (Vtt) verbs.

Furthermore, simple transitive verbs could be broken down into sub categories such as transitive (pt), transitive (loc.) transitive (m.) and so on.

Fig. 2:   Theoretical verb Subcategorization
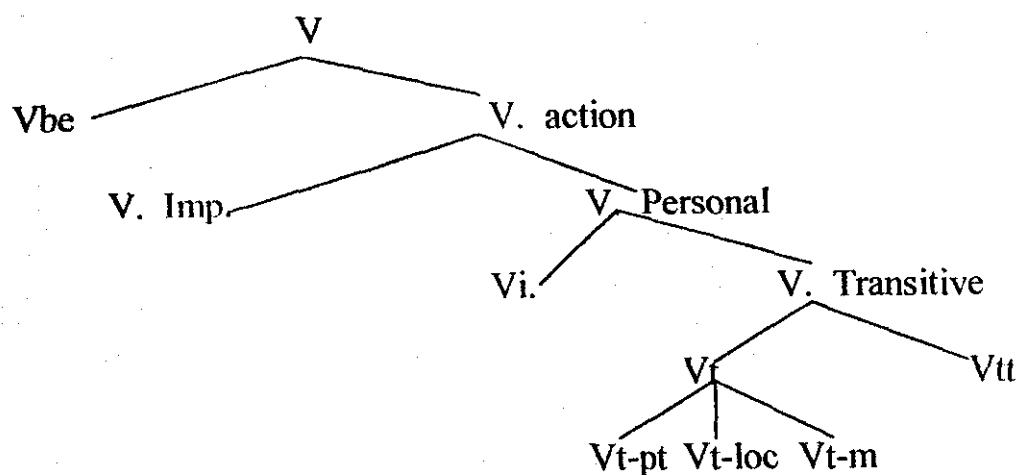
The Five Verb Categories

1.   Intransitive Verbs (Vi)
An intransitive verb is a verb that requires only one participant, usually either an agent or an experiencer.

NP: ag + V:
19   The woman sings.

N.P. ex. + V:
20.   The monkey died.

II   Transitive Verbs (Vt).

A transitive verb is a verb that requires two participants, usually an agent or an experiencer as subject and patient, a recipient or measure as complement.

NP_1: ag + Vt + NP_2: pt

21   The woman cut the dog.

NP_1: ex. + Vt + NP_2: m

22   The girl weighs eight kilos.

NP_1: ag + Vt + NP_2: loc.

23   The children go to school.

III   The Ditransitive Verbs (Vtt).

A ditransitive verb is one which requires three participants: an agent for subject, a patient as complement and a locative or beneficiary recipient as the other complement.

24

NP_1: ag + Vtt + NP_2: pt + NP_3: ben.
The boy gave a bag to his mother.

25

NP_1: ag + Vtt + NP_2 :pt + NP_3: loc.
The girl put the food on the stool.

IV   Impersonal Verbs (Vimp)

An impersonal verb is a verb of which the grammatical subject does not correspond to a participant. That is why the symbol ($\emptyset$) is used to indicate the absence of a participant.

26   NP_1: $\emptyset$ + Vimp
       it rains.

V.   State Verbs (Vbe)

A State Verbs indicates some sort of identity, similarity or equivalence between two entities or participants.

NP_1: it + Vbe + NP_2: desc.

27 .   This woman is a fool.

NP_1 : it + Vbe + NP_2: desc.

28   This meat looks rotten.

NP_1: it + Vbe + NP_2: desc.

29   That baby will become a tall girl.

The Bi-parametric Syntactic Approach

Case grammar obliges us to use two types of categorical symbols since it takes into account both deep structure and surface structure relationships of sentence elements. Thus, every argument of a sentence will receive both a deep structure identity symbol and a surface structure identity symbol.

NP_1 : ag

30   The woman came.

NP_1 = Surface structure symbol
       grammatical subject of the sentence.

.   = symbol correlation

ag   = deep structure symbol
       agent of the action expressed by the verb.

1.6.3. Mak Halliday's Phrase Structure Model

In this approach introduced by Halliday (1964) a phrase must have a nucleus (H) which may be accompanied by one or several satellites.

For a noun phrase, the head (H) can be accompanied by two large types of satellites: the determiner (D) and the qualifier (Q). Hence, the NP is composed of {H,Q,P}. The verb phrase is far more complex: it includes a verb and one or more noun phrases. The verb is usually accompanied by one or several modality indicators. When these indicators are autonomous they are usually part of what we may call the verb group.

Noun Phrase Analysis

NP $\longrightarrow$ {H, Q, D}

H $\longrightarrow$ N

Q $\longrightarrow$ Adj

D $\longrightarrow$ {Art; Poss; Num; Dem; Quant.}

The noun phrase is decomposed into three types of constituents: the head (H) or nucleus; a qualifying adjective (Q) and a determiner (D). This is at the highest level of analysis.

At the second level of analysis the head (H) is represented by a noun (N), the qualifier is represented as a qualifying adjective (adj.); as for the determiner (D) we have five different types: the article (Art), the possessive (Poss), the demonstrative (Dem), the numeral (Num) and the qualifier (Quant.).

At the third level, we may go further to identify different types of nouns, different types of articles, possessive determiners, demonstrative determiners, numerals and qualifying adjectives. But there is no need to go into such details normally.

Examples of Noun Phrase Analysis.

31

The three little pigs; NP $\longrightarrow$ D - D - Q - H

Art Num Adj N

The - three - little - pigs

32

That tiny closed cage; NP → D - Q - Q - H
　　　　　　　　　　　　　Dem - Adj - Adj - N
　　　　　　　　　　　　　That - tiny - closed - cage

33

Those two big towels; NP → D - D - Q - H
　　　　　　　　　　　　　Dem - Num - Adj - N
　　　　　　　　　　　　　Those - two - big - towels.

34　　　　H - D - Q
　　　　　N - Poss - Adj
Yamba :　Mbûjàm sā çaçap dzəmlō ngŏ wŏ
　　　　　Dog my Pl wild　　sleep　when tired.
　　　　　" My wild dogs sleep when tired."

1.7　Research Methodology.

We used the translation approach with the basic declarative affirmative utterance as the "tertium comparationis". This is a technical term in contrastive analysis introduced by Uspensky (1968) to refer to an initial correlation unit assumed to exist in all languages under a given study, a unit which is intended to serve as a starting point for comparison.

The second assumption is that in most languages the most basic declarative utterances are structured around the verb and that the nouns grammatically or semantically express cases as indicated in our theoretical framework.

Since cases are universal i.e. identical in all languages, we used English sentence patterns based on different verb subcategoriszation and case distribution to discover the possible sentence types in Yamba. Since we do not know the language, we had to use our informants to translate.

This method was used to identify the various basic sentence types, the various noun phrase structure types and various verb forms.

Table 7: **Informants**

Name	Sex	Occupation	Dialect of origin	Languages spoken
Dr. Jikong Stephen	Male	Senior Lecturer	Gwembe	English, French Gwembe
Mrs. Jikong Christina	Female	Midwife	Mbem	English, Wimbum, Mbem
Mr. Oumaru Musa	Male	Driver	Mbem	Pidgin, Mbem
Mrs. Bouba Therese	Female	Secretary	Koffa, Lus	Hausa, English, Yamba
Mr. Ferdinand S.	Male	Student	Mbem	English, Mbem
Mrs. Dickmu Elizabeth	Female	Teacher	Mbem	English, Wimbum, Mbem
Mr. Victor Febsar	Male	Student	Ntong	English, Mbem

1.8 Outline of the Study

Our study is divided into five chapters. In Chapter One, which is the introduction, after stating the aims and significance of this study we present the geographical situation as well as the Linguistic classification of the Yamba Language and its speakers. Then after presenting our theoretical framework and Literature review we present our methodology before giving this outline.

In Chapter Two, we present an overview of the various structure types of the Yamba basic sentence.

In Chapter Three our attention is focused on the various structure types of the Yamba noun phrase, which is one of the immediate constituents of the basic sentence.

In Chapter Four, we examine the verb in the Yamba sentence and in Chapter Five we point out what has marked us in our research as well as in Yamba as a language.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE

2.1 Inventory of the Yamba Basic Sentence Types

If we take into account only surface morphosyntactic criteria we may state that Yamba manifests only three types of basic sentence structures. That is, the two constituent types, the three constituent types and the four constituent types. But if we use both surface structures and deep structure criteria as imposes the case grammar procedure, we note that the initially surface structure sentence types are further subdivided into many other types on the basis of the deep structure identity of the noun phrases that accompany the various verbs. In this sense, Yamba manifests seven basic sentence structure types as indicated in the table below:

Table 7:   Yamba Basic Sentence Structure Types

1 Y.st. 1.a. = NP: ag + Vi

2 Y.st. 1.b. = NP: ex + Vi

3 Y.st. 2.a. = NP_1: ag +   Vt + NP_2: pt

4 Y.st. 2.b. = NP_1: ag +   Vt + NP_2: loc

5 Y.st. 3.a. = NP_1: ag +   Vtt + NP_2: pt + NP_3: ben

6 Y.st. 3.b. = NP_1: ag +   Vtt + NP_2: pt + NP_3: loc

7 Y.st. 4.a. = NP_1: lt +   Vbe + NP_2: desc.

Y. st. 1.a. = NP: ag + Vi

In this type of structure, the sentence is composed of an action verb,(vi) preceded by a grammatical subject corresponding to the agent of the action. (NP_1: ag.)

Example: NP_1: ag + Vi

1.   mɔ̀ŋwànə̀   sə̄ jwi'
           girl   the   pr   laugh
           "The girl laughs"

Y.st. 1.b.= NP_1 : ex. + Vi

In this type of sentence structure, the sentence is composed of a verb of action, (vi) preceded by a grammatical subject corresponding to the experiencer of the action. (NP_1 : ex.).

Example : NP_1 : ex.   +   Vi

2.   ŋwùn nə   à   pú
           man   the p_1 die
           "The man died"

Y.st. 2.a = NP_1 : ag + Vt + NP_2 : pt.

Here, the sentence is composed of a verb of action (Vt), preceded by a grammatical subject that corresponds to the agent of the action. (NP_1: ag), and followed by a grammatical complement corresponding to the patient of the action (NP_2 : pt).

Example : NP_1 : ag   +   Vt   + NP_2 : pt.

3.   ŋwɑ   nə   à   tí   kɨ   nə̄
           woman   the p_1 cut   rope   the
           "The woman cut the rope"

Y.st. 2.b = NP_1 : ag + Vt + NP_2 : loc.

In this type of structure, the sentence is composed of a verb of action,(vt) preceded by a grammatical subject which corresponds to the agent of the action, (NP_1 : ag), and is followed by a noun phrase corresponding to the location of the action (NP_2 : loc.).

Example : NP₁ : ag   +   Vt   +   NP₁ : loc.

4.   bwe¹ sə   à gìlò mə́ ndáp
      children the   p₁ walk to house
      "The children walk to the house."

Y.st. 3.a = NP₁ : ag + Vtt + NP₂ : pt. + NP₃ : ben.

In this type of structure, the sentence is composed of an action verb, preceded by a grammatical subject which corresponds to the agent of the action, and followed by two grammatical complements, the first of which corresponds to the patient of the action (NP₂ : pt), and the second of which corresponds to the beneficiary of the action(NP₃ : ben.).

Example : NP₁ : ag + Vtt + NP₂ : pt + NP₃ : ben

5.   Ŋgwìegū nə̀ à fá   kwàŋ nə̀ bōhô ndùgù nə̄
      wife(bride) the p₁ give ring the to groom the
      "The bride gave the ring to the groom."

Y.st. 3.b. = NP₁ : ag + Vtt + NP₂ : pt. + NP₃ : loc.

In this type, the sentence is composed of an action verb, preceded by a grammatical subject which corresponds to the agent of the action (NP₁: ag) and followed by two grammatical complements, the first of which is the patient of the action (NP₁:pt) and the second of which is the location of the action (NP₃: loc).

Example: NP₁ : ag + Vtt   + NP₁ : pt. + NP₁: loc

6.   Mɔ̀ŋwà nə̀ sə̀ lé lô mɔ̀ nə̀ ndzə́ nteì?
      Girl   the pr carry go child the to market.
      "The girl is carrying the child to the market."

Y.st. 4. = NP₁ : It + Vbe + NP₂ : desc.

In this type of structure, the sentence is composed of a state verb (Vbe), preceded by a grammatical subject which corresponds to an item (NP1: it), and

following by a grammatical complement corresponding to the description of the item (NP₂: desc.).

Example: NP₁ : It   +   Vbe   +   NP₂ : desc.

7   fùk   ně   sèkè   bùbóŋ

          fish   this   look   nice

          "This fish looks nice."

2.2 Immediate Constituent Types

As we pointed out earlier on, the nucleus of any verb sentence is the verb which may be accompanied by one, two or three noun phrases, $(C_1...C_n)$, hence the immediate constituents of the sentence will be considered to be the verb and its attached noun phrases. According to the verb subcategorisation, Yamba verbs can be first of all subdivided into state verbs (Vbe) and action verbs (Vact).

The action verbs can be subdivided into intransitive verbs (Vi), transitive (Vt) and ditransitive verbs (Vtt).

As for the noun phrase, there are three surface structure types, the grammatical subject (NP₁), the first complement (NP₂) and the second complement (NP₃). At the deep structure level the noun phrases can be subdivided into agent (ag), experiencer (ex.), item (it), patient (pt), location (loc), beneficiary (ben) and description (desc).

Fig. 3:   **Graphic Representation of the Constituent Types.**
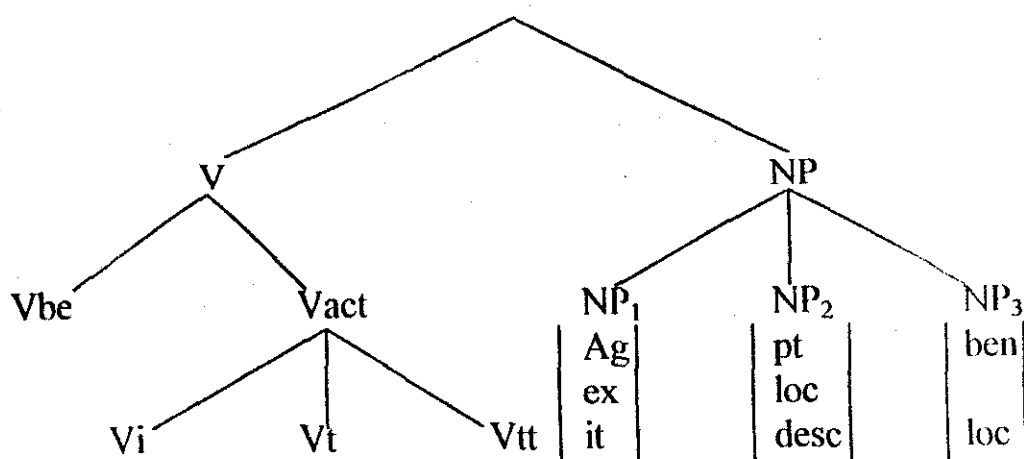
2.2.1 Verb Constituents (Vi, Vt, Vtt, Vbe)

Yamba manifests both state verbs and action verbs; the action verbs are subdivided into intransitive (Vi), transitive (Vt) and ditransitive verbs Vtt).

Action verbs

Intransitive Verbs (Vi)
>   jwí   =   laugh

Example:

8.   mɔ̀ nə̀ à jwí
            child the p₁ laugh
            "The child laughed."

Transitive Verbs (Vt)
>   çí   =   cut

Example :

9.   taiçıçí   à çí kɨ nə̀
            grandfather p₁ cut rope the
            "The grandfather cut the rope."

Ditransitive Verbs (Vtt).
>   lò   =   "go"

Example:

10.   mbú nə à gìlò mə́ ndáp
       dog the p₁ go to house

"The dog goes to the house."

State Verbs (Vbe)

Sə̀kə̀   =   to seem

Example:

11.   mɔ̀   ně   sə̀kə̀   būp
             child this seem bad
             "This child seems to be bad."

2.2.2. Noun phrase Constituent Types (NP_1, NP_2, NP_3).

Grammatical Subject Constituents (NP_1)

12   NP_1: ag.   (agent)
           mɔ̀ŋwànə̀ sə̀ jwí
           girl the   P laugh
           "The girl laughs."

13   NP_1: it   (item)
            ŋwà   nə̄ bùbɔ́ŋ
           woman the good
           "The woman is good."

14   NP_1: ex   (experiencer)
           ŋwùn nə̄ à pú
           man the p_1 die
           "The man died."

First Complement Constituent (NP_2)
                     NP_2: pt

1.   ŋwà nə̄ à tí <u>kì nə</u>   (Patient)
          woman the p_1 cut rope
          "The woman cut the rope."

                     NP_2 : loc (locative)
2.   bwe sə̄ wə̄ŋ à gìlò <u>mə̀ ntè</u>
        children the p_1 go   to market
        "The children walk to the market."

3.
      NP$_2$: desc . (description)

fúk ně <u>bùbóŋ</u>
fish this good
"This fish is good."

4.
      NP$_2$: desc . (description)

ngà ně <u>bŭp</u>
man this bad
"This man is bad."

Second Complement Constituent (NP$_3$)

1.
           NP$_3$: loc (locative)

Pàtú nə à lúm mbú nə <u>sēmbwēj dzɔ̀k</u>
Cat the p$_1$ bite dog the under chair
"The cat bit the dog under the chair."

2.
           NP$_3$: ben (beneficiary)

taiçiçi nə à fá bàm sə̀ bòhò <u>mwē nè̱ ŋwùmbám</u>
grandfather the p give bag the his child the son
"The grandfather gave the bag to his son."

2.3 Structural Indicators

At the level of the sentence, Yamba seems to exploit two morphosyntactic structural indicators which are word order and prepositions.

2.3.1 Word Order

Yamba, like most Niger-Congo languages is an S.V.O. language. This means anything before the verb is automatically the grammatical subject of the sentence while that which follows the verb is the complement. Hence, Yamba does not need any such elements as verb-subject concords or other structural elements to indicate these functions.

Examples:

1. NP$_1$: ag + Vt + NP$_2$: pt.
    Ŋwà nə à tí kɨ nē
    Woman the p$_1$ cut rope the
    "The woman cut the rope."

Knowing that " tí " (to cut) is a transitive action verb requiring a patient complement (Vt-pt) we conclude automatically that " Ŋwà nə " (the woman) is the agent while "kɨ nə" (the rope) is the patient. We base our conclusion here on our knowledge of the meaningful word order.

2. NP$_1$: It + Vbe + NP$_2$: desc.
    fùk nə sèkè bùbɔ́ŋ
    fish the seem nice / good
    "The fish seems nice."

Knowing that " sèkè " (to seem) is a state verb, we conclude automatically that " fùk nə " (the fish) is the item while " bùbɔ́ŋ " (nice) is the description. All this is because we are exploiting the meaningful word order.

In all the above examples, the subject precedes the verb while the complement (NP$_2$) follows it. But as to whether the subject is an agent (ag), an experiencer (ex) or an item (it), whether the complement is a patient (pt), an evaluation (m) or a description (desc.) depends entirely on the verb categorization of the central verb; no extra surface morphosyntactic indicators are required. Word order must not be tampered with.

2.3.2 PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words which usually indicate or express location.

Yamba manifests a number of prepositions which help to indicate the relationship between the central verb and the various types of complements.

It has been observed that the preposition mə́ in Yamba functions as a marker of location. It may be combined with other elements of the body for instance to give meaning. This phenomenon has also been observed in other languages of the North west such as Bafut for instance, in which á plays the same role for on, in, to and so on.

Examples: Bafut

(a)　Mary kì nɔ̄ŋsə́ á tú ndâ
　　　Mary p₂ put P head house.
　　　"Mary put (it) on the roof."

Yamba: mə́ =in, down

(b)　jĭ çú mə́　ŋkwè　ndáp　àm
　　　he stay in behind house my
　　　"He stays behind my house."

(c)　lĭ　tsŏ　mə́　tú　ndáp
　　　jump down from head house
　　　"Jump down from the roof."

Other prepositions include:

　　　Sèmvwè　= (inside)

Example:
　　　Mɔ̀ nə̄ sèmvwè bǎm sə̄
　　　child the inside bag the
　　　"The child is inside the bag."

　　　Màŋtòmbì = (infront)

Example:
　　　Mbʉ́ nə̄ çú màŋtàmbì ndáp nà
　　　dog the sit infront　house　the
　　　"The dog is infront of the house."

CHAPTER THREE

THE YAMBA NOUN PHRASE

3.1. The Yamba Noun (Class system)

Since Yamba is at the geographical periphery of bantu and semi-bantu languages, the first legitimate temptation of any linguist is to look for signs of a noun class system. Unlike the East African and South African languages like Luganda and Isizulu which manifest about twenty noun-classes which are very conspicuous in the whole sentence, the Cameroonian North-West semi-bantu languages rarely manifest more than six noun-classes, and even then, such classes are not morphologically very conspicuous throughout the sentence.

Examples:

1.   [Luganda, Swahili, Bafut, Yamba]

English: One small chair will get lost.

Luganda: entebe entono emu eributa
              Chair small one fat get lost

Swahili: kiti kidogo kimoja kitapotea
              Chair small one   fat get lost.

Yamba: ɟó mɔ́ nə́ dzoˈ nə bísə́
            Small the small the lost

Bafut: àlìŋ yíkə̀ˈə̀tì yá ká kì bwê
            Chair small the p₂ lost

Although the morphological influence of the noun in the Yamba example is not very conspicuous throughout the sentence, Yamba still exhibits characteristics of a noun class language. What makes Yamba different from other noun class

languages is the fact that the noun classes are rather few, membership in them is semantically irregular and the concord system is often not very evident.

The noun classes identified in this study are represented below. An examination of the Yamba noun class system shows that the language has got very few nominal prefixes marking the singular and plural forms. These prefixes alongside concord in possessive determiners have helped us to determine the noun classes into which the nouns are classified in the table below:

Table 8:   Yamba Noun-classes

Class 1.(Prefix N-)	Class 2. (Prefix bə-)
mwé	bwé
"child"	"children"
ŋgwié	jép
"wife"	"wives"
ŋwàŋwē	bèbá
"woman"	"women"
ŋwē	bwē
"man"	"men"
lúmŋgóŋ	lŭumŋgóŋ
"year"	"years"
ŋwùmbăm	bèmbâm
"one man"	"men"
mwēmbàm	bwēmbàm
"child man"	"children man"
"boy"	"boys"
mɔ̀ŋwànē	bwēbājă
"child woman"	"children women"
"girl"	"girls"

We notice from the examples above that, the nouns that fall into these two classes are mainly related to kinship terms; (child, woman, man, girl, boy etc). We also notice a few exceptions with a different prefix.

l - lúmŋgóŋ, m - in mwē, j - in jep

In Classes 1a and 1b; we have examples of nouns with a zero prefix (ø). These nouns have been noted to have no plural forms. Another morpheme (sə) or numeral must accompany them to mark the plural. These nouns include both inanimate and animate items.

Examples: Class 3((Prefix ø)

Vép
"bone"

mvép
"chicken"

nsəsə
"resemblance"
ntíp
"advice"

bwìŋ
"squirrel"

mbwìŋ
"breast"

gàŋ
"okro"

ŋgáŋ
"bush"

ŋkúm
"chief"

3.2 The satellites of the Noun.

3.2.1 Yamba Determiners

A determiner is generally defined as a fixed set of grammar words which give information relating to definiteness and indefiniteness (object).

Yamba manifests four types of determiners in the nounphrase; they are: the possessive (Poss) the demonstrative (Dem), the numeral (Num) and the quantifier (Quant).

We shall discuss their characteristics as well as the distribution of each modifier vis-à-vis the noun.

3.2.1.1 The Yamba Possessive Determiner (Poss)

As in any Niger-Congo language, it is difficult to understand the possessive system without first examining the personal pronoun system. We shall do the same with our study on Yamba.

Yamba manifests six (6) subject personal pronouns corresponding to the first, second and third persons, each having a singular and plural variant as indicated below:

Table 9:   Yamba Personal Pronoun System

Person	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
First (1st)	mè	I	Vēs	We
Second (2nd)	wō	You	Wēŋ	You
Third (3rd)	Jí	He / she / it	Wó	They

Examples:

i   mè zú bɛʔ ŋkpwìs
     I eat food yesterday
     "I ate fufu"

ii   wó zú bɛʔ ŋkpwìs
     you eat food yesterday
     "you ate fufu"

iii   jí   zʉ́   bɛ́ʔ   ŋkpwìs
he/she/it eat food yesterday
"he/she/it ate fufu"

iv   v<u>ē</u>s zʉ́ bɛ́ʔ ŋkpwìs
we eat food yesterday
"we ate fufu"

v   w<u>é</u>ŋ zʉ́ bɛ́ʔ ŋkpwìs
you eat food yesterday
"you ate fufu"

vi   w<u>ó</u> zʉ́ bɛ́ʔ ŋkpwìs
they eat food yesterday
"they ate fufu"

The personal pronouns above remain constant. They are not affected by the changes in the number of persons.

In Yamba, just like in most languages, there is a direct correlation between the subject personal pronouns and the possessive pronouns.

This correlation is noticed in the form of the words which are similar to each other.

Table 10: Correlation between the subject personal pronouns and the possessive determiners.

Singular		Plural	
Subject personal pronouns	Possessive determiners	Subject personal pronouns	Possessive determiners
mè (i)	àm (my)	vēs (we)	àvēs (our)
wō (you)	jó (your)	wēŋ (you)	àwēŋ (your)
jí (he/she/it)	jié (his/her)	wó (they)	àwō (their)

From Table 10. above, we notice a similarity between vēs (we) and àvēs (our); wēŋ (you) and àwēŋ (your); wó (they) and àwō (their). A new element -

has been added to these to mark the difference in the plural forms of the subject personal pronouns and the possessive determiners.

In the singular, we also have a few similarities in wō (you) and jó (your); jǐ (he, she, it) and jié (his/her).

Yamba Possessive Determiners

Just as the personal pronouns seen earlier Yamba manifests six (6) possessive determiners and these are illustrated in **table 11** below:

Table 11

Person	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
First (1st)	àm	my	àvēs	our
Second (2nd)	jó	your	àwēŋ	your
Third (3rd)	jié	his/her	ĝwó	their

When the possessive is used to modify the noun, it follows the headnoun and agrees with it in number.

Singular Possessors

Examples:

a)- àm = (my)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
Mɔ́ àm	bwé n- àm	mvə́p àm
Child my	children my	chicken my
"my child"	"my children"	"my chicken"

b)- jó = (your)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
ŋgwié jó	jep jó	ŋgáŋ jǒ
Wife your	wives your	grass your
"your wife"	"your wives"	"your grass"

c)- jiĕ = (his/her)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
ŋwâŋwé jiĕ	bèbá jiĕ	ŋkúm jiĕ
Woman his/her	women his/her	chief his/her
"his/her woman"	"his/her women"	"his/her chief"

Plural Possessors

Examples:

a)- àvēs = (our)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
ŋgwí àvēs	jep àvēs	ŋgàŋ àvēs
Wife our	wives our	grass our
"our wife"	"our wives"	"our grass"

b)- àwèŋ = (your)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
mwé àwèŋ	bwé àwèŋ	ŋkúm àwèŋ
child your	children your	chief your
"your child"	"your children"	"your chief"

c)- àwó = (their)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
mwé àwó	bwé àwó	ŋkúm àwó
child their	children their	chief their
"their child"	"their children"	"their chief"

3.2.1.2 The Yamba Demonstrative Determiner (Dem)

A demonstrative determiner is a word that is used with a noun to provide more information about the location of the noun in relation to the participants in the dialogue. Many Niger-Congo languages manifest a tripple opposition system of demonstration corresponding to 1. this (+proximity to speaker), 2. that (-distant from speaker but + proximity to listener) and 3. that (distant from speaker and listener).

Fig. 4:   **Proximity to Participants in Dialogue**

(Sing.)	ně + i	ně (+ you)	jǎ (-i , -you)
(pl.)	jě	nə	jǎ
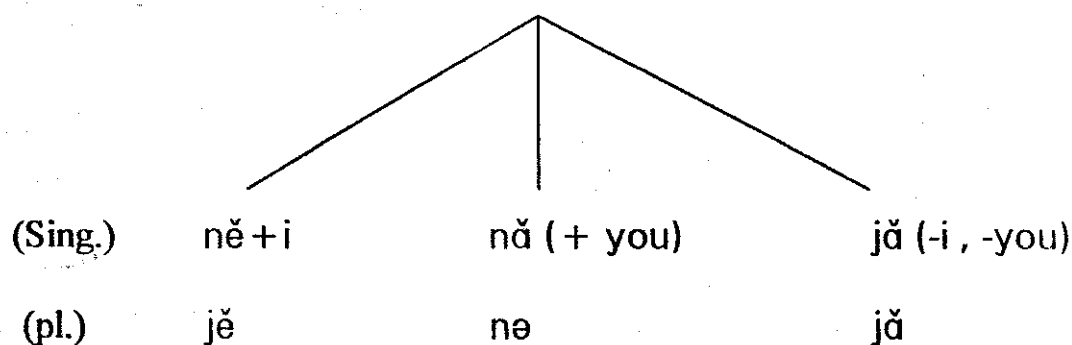
There is no agreement as far as class is concerned. The form of the demonstrative does not change as we move from one class to the other.

The table below represents an exhaustive inventory of Yamba demonstrative determiners.

Table N° 12 :   Demonstrative Determiners in Yamba.

Proximity to participants	Singular demonstrators	Gloss	Plural demonstrators	Gloss
Near Speaker (N.S.)	ně	this	jě	these
Far from speaker	nǎ	that	jǎ	those
Far from speaker and listener	nè	that	jǎ sə	those

The following noun phrases illustrate the distribution of the demonstrative determiner vis-à vis the head noun.

Examples:

a) ně = this   Cl.1   b) nǎ = that   Cl.3
    Ŋgwiě gū ně   bwiŋ nǎ
    Wife   this   squirrel that
    "This wife"   "That squirrel"

a) ʃě = these   Cl.2   b) ʃǎ = that   Cl.3
    bəbá ʃě   bwiŋ   ʃǎ
    Wives these   squirrel those
    "These wives"   "Those squirrels"

The determiner comes after the noun in the above phrases. The same phenomenon is observed in the examples below:

a) nǎ = that   (NL)   b)   ʃǎ = those   (FSL)
   mɔ ŋwɑ   nǎ   bwé bǎ   ʃǎ
   child woman that   children women those
   "That girl"   "Those girls"

If we look carefully at the nature of the language, we note that these demonstrative elements can also play the role of "definite" articles corresponding to the English "the". In this case however, the demonstrative serves to specify a particular noun that had already been mentioned in the discourse or which is known to both speaker and listener.

Examples:

nǎ = that   (FSL)
mɔ̀ ŋwɑ̀ nǎ
child woman that
"That girl" (The girl we have talked about).

This phenomenon is not unique to Yamba. Swahili has a similar system where the demonstrative determiners can be used to express the notion of definiteness.

3.2.1.3   Yamba Numerals

Numerals are determiners which indicate an estimation of countable nouns. Numbering in Yamba is serial for cardinal numbers from one to ten.

Cardinal Numbers in Yamba

mɔ̀fɪs	=	one
bɑ̄	=	two
tei?	=	three
kwiě	=	four
tɑ̀ŋ	=	five

ntùmfù	=	six
sāmbá	=	seven
fwāmē	=	eight
vèké?	=	nine
húm	=	ten

The numbers from eleven to nineteen are got as a result of combining the above serial numbers using the mathematical operation + (addition).

Examples :

a)   húm nçè? mòfis   =   eleven
      ten   plus one

b)   húm nçè? vèké?   =   nineteen
      ten   plus nine

Twenty, thirty, forty etc. are obtained via use of the mathematical operation of addition. Thus twenty is "ten two times" or "10x2" while thirty is "10x3".

To obtain the numbers between 20 and 30, we combine multiplication and addition. Thus twenty-one is 10x2 +1 and so on. The same holds for any number between two tens.

Examples:

i   húm bā   =   twenty
      ten two

ii   húm bā nçè? mòfis =   twenty one
      ten two plus one

iii   húm bā nçè? tàŋ   =   twenty five
      ten two plus five

iv   húm tei?   =   thirty
      ten three

v   húm tei? nçè? tei? =   thirty three

ten three plus three

| vi | húm kwiě | = | forty |
| | ten four | | |

| vii | húm tàŋ | = | fifty |
| | ten five | | |

| viii | húm ntùmfù | = | sixty |
| | ten six | | |

| ix | húm sāmbá | = | seventy |
| | ten seven | | |

| x | húm fwāmē | = | eighty |
| | ten eight | | |

| xi | húm vəké? | = | ninety |
| | ten nine | | |

| xii | kɨ mòfɩs | = | one hundred |
| | hundred one | | |

The working of numerals in Yamba can best be demonstrated when they are put in relation with the few existing noun classes in the language. The examples below also illustrate their distribution vis-à-vis the head noun.

Examples:

a) **mòfɩs = one**
    Cl.1
    bwé mbàm mòfɩs
    Child man one
    "one boy"

    Cl.3
    vəp mòfɩs
    bone one
    "one bone"

b) **bā** = two
   Cl.2
   Bwé mbàm bā
   children man two
   "two boys"

   Cl.3
   vèp bā
   bone two
   "two bones"

From the examples above, the noun precedes the numerals in Yamba and as far as the agreement pattern is concerned, they show no agreement vis-à-vis the head noun.

The Ordinal Numbers in Yamba

Yamba manifests just a few ordinal numbers which are: first, next or following and last.

Examples:

nè măŋtōmbì   =   (the first)
nè bé?lélŏ   =   (the following)
nè lìsè   =   (the last)

In the examples below we will illustrate the distribution of these ordinal numbers in Yamba and study the agreement pattern as well.

Examples:

a) măŋtōmbì   =   (first)

   Cl.1
i)   Mò ŋwàŋwè nè măŋtōmbì
     Child woman the first
     "The first girl"

Cl.2

ii)　Bwé　bèbá　sè　mǎŋtōmbì
Children women the first
"The first girls"

Cl.3

iii)　bwïŋ nè mǎŋtōmbì
squirrel the first
"The first squirrel"

b)　bé?lélǒ　=　(next)

Cl.1		Cl.2

i)　mò　wàŋwè　nè bé?lélǒ　　ii)　bwé　bèbá　sè　bé?lélǒ
child　girl　the　next　　　　　Children women the next
"The next girl"　　　　　　　　"The next girls"

c)　lîsé　=　(last)

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3

i)　Mɔ̄　nè　lîsé　　ii)　bwé　sè　lîsé　　iii)　bwïŋ　nè　lîsé
child the last　　　　Children the last　　　squirrel the last
"The last child"　　　"The last children"　　"The last squirrel"

No agreement has been noticed between the ordinal numbers and the head noun and they appear after the noun just like cardinal numerals.

3.2.1.4　Yamba Quantifiers

Among the determiners of the Yamba noun phrase, we also find a few quantifiers. The examples below will illustrate their distribution in the noun phrase in relation to the head noun.

Examples :

kpwé　=　(all, everybody)
ndáp　wé　kpwé　sè　dzémló
house (pl m) all　Pr　sleep
"Everybody is sleeping."

nkə̆ŋ = (many, much)

    Ŋwà nə̀ çé bwé nkə̆ŋ
    Woman the have children many
    "The woman has many children."

ndwî? = (very little)

    fá mɨ ç î? m' ndwi?
    give me salt very little
    "Give me a little bit of salt."

In Yamba these are just a few and they follow the head noun in the phrase.

3.2.1.5   Yamba Adjective (Adj)

Adjectives give more information about a noun concerning its quality as opposed to determiners which are either demonstrative or possessive or quantifiers and numerals. Adjectives can play the role of predicates whereas determiners cannot.

Adjectives are usually divided into two main groups: Attributive and Predicative Adjectives.

Attributive Adjectives are those that assign a particular quality to the nouns they modify. In the literature, one encounters, expressions such as "qualifying adjectives" used in place of attributive adjectives.

Examples: Attributive Adjectives in Yamba.

fúfə̂ = fat

Cl.1	Cl.2	Cl.3
Ŋgwiégù fúfə̂	ʃépgù fúfə̂	mvə́p fúfə̂
Wife fat	wives fat	chicken fat
"a fat wife "	"fat wives"	"fat chicken"

In the above examples the attributive adjectives follow the head-noun and there is no agreement noticed between the noun and the adjective.

These attributive adjectives can further be subdivided into: pure and derived adjectives. Yamba has been seen to manifest pure adjectives but as for derived adjectives we are not certain yet.

Examples: Pure Adjectives.

<u>nwé? = lazy</u>

i   **Cl.1**
     Mɔ̀ nə̀ <u>nwé?</u>
     Child the lazy
     "the lazy child"

ii   **Cl.2**
     bwé mbàm sə̀sáp
     children man the tall
     " the tall boys"

iii   **Cl.3**
     bwĩŋ nə̀ ɟô
     squirrel the small
     "the small squirrel"

Attributive adjectives deal with generic reference as opposed to predicative adjectives which deal with specific reference.

Predicative adjectives on the other hand in Bantu languages are often derived from verbs. In the structure, these adjectives are in a subject predicate relation with the noun. However, in this situation, the adjective still specifies some quality or characteristic inherent in the noun.

<u>Examples : Predicative Adjectives</u>

     mɔ̀ nə̀ <u>nwé?</u>
     Child the lazy
     "The child is lazy "

bwé   nè   nwé?
Children the lazy
"The children are lazy "

In Yamba, the adjectives do not change in form; be they attributive or predicative.

3.3. Yamba Noun Phrase Structure

Jack Richard et al. (1985, P.251) define the noun phrase as:

A group of words with a noun or pronoun as the main part (the head). The noun phrase may consist of only one word (for example "George" in George arrived yesterday) or it may be long and complex (for example, all the words before "must" in "The students who enrolled late and have not filed in their cards must do so before Friday".

Yamba is a head initial language, that is the head of the phrase comes in the first position (H + D + Q).

We have identified eight noun phrase structure types; those composed of the head alone (N), those composed of a head followed by a determiner; N + (Poss), (Dem), (Num), (Quant), those composed of a head followed by a qualifying adjective (N + Adj) and those composed of a noun followed by another noun (N of N) and finally the more complex ones composed of a head followed by an embedded sentence which usually functions as a relative clause.

In this section we will discuss the characteristics as well as the distribution of each modifier vis-à-vis the noun with Yamba examples.

Table 13:   Yamba Noun Phrase Structure Types

N°1. NP ⟶ N

N°2. NP ⟶ N   +   Poss

N°3. NP ⟶ N   +   Dem

Nº4. NP ⟶ N + Num

Nº5. NP ⟶ N + Quant

Nº6. NP ⟶ N + Adj

Nº7. NP ⟶ N + N

Nº8. NP ⟶ N + CP

3.3.a. Structure Type: NP ⟶ N

Example:

NP₁
mbú wé dzēmlò ngō wǒ
dog (pl m) sleep when tired
"Dogs sleep when they are tired."

Here, the noun as we mentioned earlier is the head in the phrase.

Structure Type: NP ⟶ N + Poss

Example:

NP₁
Jep àm wé dzēmlò ngǒ wǒ
Wives my they sleep when tired
"My wives sleep when they are tired."

Here, the nouns precedes the possessive (àm)

Structure Type: NP ⟶ N + Dem

Examples:

i) N + Dem
    Nzóm ně
    Farm this
    "This farm."

ii)   N   +   Dem
       Ndáp   nǎ
       house   that
       "That house."

iii)   N   +   Dem
       nwà   jě
       book   those \ these
       "Those \ these books."

In the structure type above the examples show the demonstratives ně (this), nǎ (that) and jě (those / these) do not change their form with the noun. As far as the distribution is concerned they appear after the noun.

Structure Type: NP⟶ N + Num

Examples:

i)   N   +   Num
       lìs   kɨ   mòfis
       Stone hundred one
       "One hundred stones"

ii)   N   +   Num
       Jep   bā
       Wives two
       "Two wives"

In this structure type, the numerals (Num) in Yamba follow the noun " lìs " (stone) in the phrase.

Structure Type: NP⟶ N + Quant

Examples:

i)   N   +   Quant   ii)   N   +   Quant
       mɔ́   nè   jó   bwéj   nkêŋ
       Child the little   children many
       "The little child"   "Many children"

Structure Type: NP⟶ N + Adj.

Examples:

i)   N + Adj   ii)   N + Adj
      ŋgwiégù <u>fúfê</u>   ʃepgù nwé?
       wife fat   wives lazy
      "A fat wife"   "lazy wives"

Structure Type: NP⟶ N + N

Examples:

In many Bantu languages, the associative construction (i.e. the N of N construction) is made up of the head noun, an associative morpheme and the dependent or genitive or associative noun. Thus, in swahili and Bafut we find the following.

1.a   Swahili
      mtoto w-a Hamisi
      Child Am Hamisis
      "Hamisi's child".

  b   Bafut
      nì-bɔzɔ ní tsítsà
      Pumpkin AM teacher
      'A teacher's pumpkin'

Yamba however, is very different from other Bantu languages because the associative morpheme seems to be missing. Thus, in the Yamba associative construction, the genitive noun immediately follows the head noun without an intervening associative morpheme. In the paragraphs that follow, I will argue that the associative morpheme in Yamba is a tonal and not a segmental unit. Because it is tonal, it obligatorily associates to the preceding noun and so on the surface, the associative morpheme appears to be missing in the associative construction.

The examples below best explain the above argument and show how the tones associate to each other.

Examples:

a) Nouns in Isolation
   Kúŋgɔ̀p, 'shoe' ŋkúm 'chief', çə̀k 'dress'
   Kə̀p 'cane', kjè bed

b) kúŋgŏ ŋkúm nə
   shoe chief the
   'The chief's shoes'

c) kjě̀ kə̀p
   bed cane
   "cane bed"

In (b) and (c) above, the head nouns in isolation bear tones on their final syllables which are underlyingly low. When the head noun and the genitive noun are collocated, the low tone on the final syllable of the head noun changes to a rising contour tone. The question one would want to answer is where the high segment of the rising contour comes from. In phonology, a new tone cannot just appear on a vowel from the blues. There must have been something that brought about such a change. Notice that the associate nouns which follow bear low tones so one cannot claim that the rising contour results from a regressive H-tone spread. From these, one is led to conclude that the rising contour on the final syllable of the head noun results from H – floating tone docking. In our examples above, we want to believe that there was previously a vowel. This vowel which also carried a high tone must have been the associative morpheme for Yamba. Given the structure of the associative construction in other Bantu languages, I propose that in Yamba, the associate morpheme is underlyingly a vowel with a high tone. In the surface, this high tone is deleted by the general Bantu vowel deletion rule which deletes one of two contiguous vowels across morpheme

boundary. After deletion, the tone remains floating and finally docks onto the final syllable of the head noun giving rise to the contour tone.

The structure in (d) below illustrates my views about the constituent structure of the associative construction in Yamba.

(d)   NI AM N2 = NI N2

We therefore conclude that Yamba has an associative morpheme which is a floating tonal unit resulting from vowel deletion.

Having determined the internal constituency of the associative constructions in the next section, I turn to the different semantic relations that hold between N1 and N2 in the associative construction.

Genitive Relations

Genitive phrases stand in different relations to the head noun. Some simply modify the head noun as possessors, some are combined with the head noun to form a compound, others are arguments of the head noun and yet others are related to the head noun in ways that are difficult to describe. I will discuss these different relations in the following paragraphs.

Genitive Possessions

This is a relation that holds between two members of a genitive construction, a possessive type of relation. The examples below illustrate this.

a)   çē   ŋwàŋwē
        dress   woman
        "dress of the woman"

b)   kjē   ŋwàŋwè
        bed   woman
        "A woman's bed"

From the examples above, the genitive phrase can be interpreted in one of two ways : a). as a pure possessor, i.e. the entity to which the first noun (NI) belongs. b) as indicating a quality or other distinguishing mark by which a person or thing is characterized (genitive of description or quality). Thus, for instance, (a) may mean "the owner of the bed" or a type of bed that women generally like (a bed with bright colours).

What is however common between the two interpretations is that the genitive phrase answers the question "which" and its meaning determines the reference of the entire genitive construction.

i) Genitives of Source/Origin: These are included in the above group which indicates the person, thing or place from which NI comes, is acquired or sought. It also expresses racial or local or native origin, descent, etc. or the notion of belonging to a place as deriving a title from it as a ruler.

Examples:

a) ŋkúm ŋwà
   chief Nwa
   "chief of Nwa"

b) fúk nà sà nto'o
   fish the prep ocean
   "Fish from the ocean"

ii) Classifying genitives : this group is adjectival in nature since it expresses a kind of quality.

a) mbwē ŋkúm wē
   spoon chief Pl marker
   "A spoon typical of chiefs"

From the above examples of genitive constructions we notice that the head noun and the genitive noun in both cases are like two separate entities that are loosely related to each other.

The genitive phrase is thus an adjunct modifier which is used to describe/ specify the type of head noun in the same way that adjectives would do to the head noun.

Each of the nouns in a genitive phrase could be freely pluralized, pre- or post modified or pronominalized. Yamba has not been able to illustrate the above since it is not inflectional. That is, we cannot have plural forms easily. But Bafut for instance, illustrates it better.

a) ø-lú?ú mfɔ
    sg - spoon sg - Chief
    "A chief's spoon"

c) ø-lú?ú bɨ-fɔ
    sg - spoon Pl - Chief
    "A spoon for chiefs"

b) bɨ-lū?ū bí m-fɔ
    Pl - spoon AM sg - Chief
    "A chief's spoons "

d) bɨ-lū?ū bɨ́ bɨ - fɔ
    Pl - spoon AM sg - Chief
    "chiefs' spoons"

The above examples show that although the head noun and the genitive noun are in a relation, they are, in a way, independent of each other. The same principle above can be applied to the genitives of source.

Compound Genitives

We have another interesting group of genitives which are intrinsically linked to the head noun. They are treated alongside the head noun as a unit or compound. We have some Yamba examples below.

i) Genitives of Purpose, Place, Time

These genitives indicate the purpose for which the referent of the head noun is used as well as the time and / or place generally associated with its use.

Examples:

a) Dzā mbwə̀p {Purpose}
    medicine cold
    "fever medicine"

b) dzā? ndáp nwī {Place}
    chair house God

"Church Bench"

c)   kúŋgò mbìŋ   {Time of use}
        shoes rain
        "rain slippers"

ii)   Genitives of Substance

These indicate the material of which something is made or consists of or holds / contains as a kind of extension or sense.

a)   Kjè kòp {material make up}   b)   là ndzòp
        bed   care   calabash water
        "care   bed"   "A calabash for water"

The genitive noun in this case specifies the kind of the reference of the head noun, it provides an answer to a given question relating to the "kind of". It serves to restrict the reference of the head noun, contrary to the genitives of possession / source.

Other examples in this class are kinship terms and some body parts.

Examples:

a)   Mvè   bó   {body parts}
        Palm hand
        "Palm of hand"

b)   Bēbá   {kinship terms}
        " aunt "

As we said at the beginning, these genitive phrases are bound to the head noun and that is what helps in determining their structural position. These compound genitives do not exhibit the freedom of being pluralized, pre-or post – modified or prenominalized. The head noun and the genitive noun must be combined to get the overall meaning.

Dependent Genitives

These genitives comprise genitive phrases which stand in a close relation to the head noun akin to the one between the verb and its object. The relationship between the two entities is a loose one but it is not as loose as that between the noun and the possessive genitives. This is because the dependent genitive is in a position always adjacent to the head noun. However, this closeness is not like that between the head noun and a compound genitive. It is not "frozen" with the head noun.

Examples:

a) lí Mèrí
    eye Mary
    "Mary's eye"

b) mbwìŋ Mèrí
    breasts Mary
    "Mary's breasts"

The examples show the most common type of dependent genitives which mark 'inalienable' possession. In this group we also have genitives which are interpreted as themes.

Examples:

Whenever the dependent genitive occurs in the same genitive construction with a possessive genitive phrase, it is always in a position immediately adjacent to the head noun.

Examples: dependent genitive and a possessor genitive.

a)   lì Mèrí dzē
     eye Mary medicine
     "Mary's eye for medicine"

The dependent genitive is immediately adjacent to the head noun. If the positions of these two genitive phrases are reversed, then the meaning of the whole construction will equally change.

b)　　lì　dzə̄　　Mèrí
　　　eye medicine Mary
　　　"Mary's medicine eye" (the eye belong to the medicine but not to Mary)

In the example above (a) refers to Mary's own eye (part of her body) but in (b) Mary is no longer adjacent to 'eye', we are referring to an eye or object like an eye which Mary uses for medicine.

Just as the dependent genitive is adjacent to the head noun, the possessor genitive could be further away.

The Simple Noun Phrase in Yamba

When the determiners are combined together in simple structures they all generally appear after the head noun and there is no agreement evident in the structures vis-à-vis the head noun.

Examples:

i)　　NP →N + Poss + Adj
　　　　　Pàtú jàm sə çə̀çə̀p à pú
　　　　　Cat my the wild p_1 die
　　　　　"My wild cat is dead."

ii)　　NP →N + Dem + Adj
　　　　　mbú nǎ sè fúfê dzēmlò ngǒ wǒ
　　　　　dog that p_r fat sleep when tired
　　　　　"That fat dog sleeps when tired."

iii)　　NP →N + Num + Adj
　　　　　Bwêbā bā sè búp sè vē
　　　　　Girls two p_r bad p_r come
　　　　　"Two bad girls are coming."

iv)　　NP →N + Adj + Adj
　　　　　Bwèbá sè kwié sè bup sə mpaɣabwin sè vè
　　　　　Girls Pr four Pr bad Pr old person Pr come
　　　　　"The four bad old girls are coming."

However, there are instances when the order many change and this is especially when the speaker wants to lay emphasis on a particular quality of the noun.

Examples:

a) NP—► Adj + Adj + N̲ + D̲e̲m̲
   Réréŋ fúfép nwà nǎ
   Old while book that
   "That old while book."

b) NP—► Adj + Adj + Adj + N̲.
   Lèlèrè bùbʉp jijirè mwèmbàm nè
   Short ugly stupid child man the
   "The very short, ugly, stupid boy."

In the second example, the words bùbʉp, lèlèrè and jijirè, are written as lèrə (short), bʉp (ugly) and jirè, (stupid). But when the speaker wants to show the extent to which the "boy" is short, ugly and stupid, he reduplicates the initial syllable and places the adjectives before the noun.

These examples show that the nouns and modifiers can be distributed differently in Yamba depending on the message the speaker wants to convey to his listeners. The noun can appear before the determiners, between and after them as seen above.

The Complex Noun Phrase

As quoted by Tamanji, Ross (1986) has this to say concerning a complex noun phrase.

Yamba Complex Noun Phrase

In languages like English, for instance, the relative pronouns: who, which and the complementizer : that, are very evident in the phrase.

Examples: <u>The relative pronouns: which, who and the complementizer: that</u>

The Fon <u>who</u> Lucia wants.

The yam <u>which</u> Susan cut.

The wine <u>which</u> Bryant drank.

The rat <u>that</u> Victor caught

The car <u>that</u> Victor bought.

When the sentences given above are translated into Yamba, these markers do not surface yet, they are understood to be present in the structure.

Examples:

Ŋkúm nè Lucia dzém
Fon the Lucia want
"The Fon who Lucia wants"

Bíʔ nè   Susan á tʃí
yam the Susan P_1 cut
"The yam which Susan cut."

Rùk nè Bryant à nú
wine the Bryant P_1 drink
"The wine which Bryant drank."

Mbàm nè Victor á kō
Rat   the Victor P_1 catch
"The rat which Victor caught."

CHAPTER FOUR

# THE YAMBA VERB

4.0. The Yamba Verb

Discussing the verb in morphosyntax, especially under the case grammar perspective ,is very delicate and can be boring because of the inevitable repetition.

First of all, in order to present the case grammar aspect of our theoretical framework we had to explain the central role played by the verb in determining the number and type of cases in a given sentence structure. And thereafter, while discussing the various types of basic Yamba sentence types, we had to point out again the central role played by the verb in determining the sentence type.

In this study of which the aim is a general overview of Yamba morphosyntax, we are going to take a rapid look at only three morphosyntactic features related to the verb. These are the valency of the Yamba verb, the extensions of the verb as well as the verb categories of tense, aspect and mood.
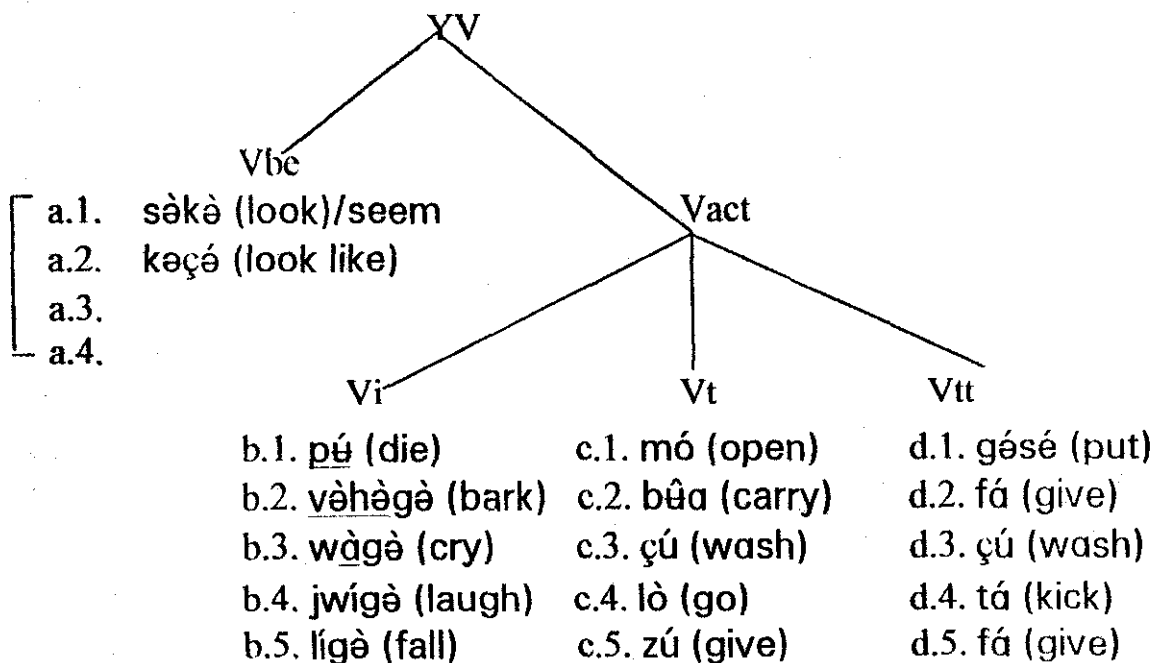
4.1. Valence of the Yamba Verb.

As we saw earlier on, like most African languages, Yamba distinguishes between state verbs (Vbe) and action verbs (Vact). Whereas all state verbs are two place verbs, Yamba manifests three types of action verbs (Vi, Vt, Vtt) and three place verbs (Vtt). The above statement can be graphically represented as follows:
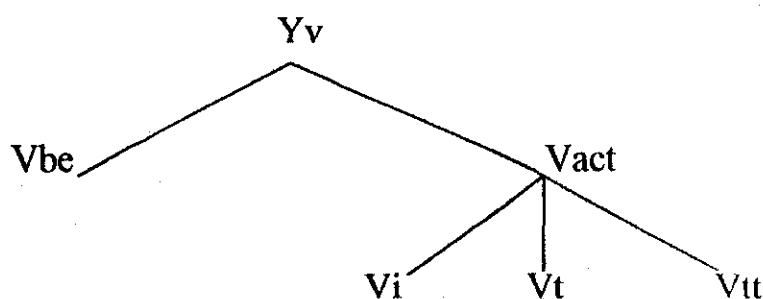
At the deep structure level the action verbs can still be further subdivided depending on the implied type of participant. Hence intransitive verbs may be subdivided into those that require an agent - subject and those that require an experiencer - subject. The transitive verbs can be subdivided into those that require a patient complement, those that require a location complement and those that require an evaluation complement.

Fig. 5: **Subcategorization of Yamba Verbs**

Vbe
a.1. sə̀kə̀ (look)/seem
a.2. kə̀çə̀ (look like)
a.3.
a.4.

Vi	Vt	Vtt
b.1. pṳ́ (die)	c.1. mó (open)	d.1. gə́sə́ (put)
b.2. və̀hə̀gə̀ (bark)	c.2. bûa (carry)	d.2. fá (give)
b.3. wạ̀gə̀ (cry)	c.3. çú (wash)	d.3. çú (wash)
b.4. jwígə̀ (laugh)	c.4. lò (go)	d.4. tá (kick)
b.5. lígə̀ (fall)	c.5. zú (give)	d.5. fá (give)

Concrete Examples (in full sentences)
Vbe

NP_1 : It + Vbe + NP_2 : desc.

1.   nzwì sə̀   sə̀kə̀   jìjə̀p'
        vegetables the look   fresh
        "The vegetables look fresh"

NP_1 : It + Vbe + NP_2 : desc.

2.   ngà nə̀   kʔ çō   nga fáʔfáʔk
        man   the   look like   man farmer
        "The man looks like a farmer"

NP_1 : It + Vbe + NP_2 : desc.

3.   nwà   nə̄   sə̀kə̀   wūwó
        woman the   seem   tired

"The woman seems to be tired."

Vi

NP_1 : ex   + Vi

4.
    ngà nē à pú
    man the P_1 die.
    "The man died."

NP_1 : ag   + Vi

5.
    mbú nē vəhə - gē
    dog the bark always
    "The dog barks."

NP_1 : ag   + Vi

6.
    mɔ̄ nē wá-gē
    child the cry always
    "The child cries."

NP_1 : ag   +   Vi

7.
    mɔ̀ŋwà nē jwí - gē
    girl   the   laugh always
    "The girl laughs."

NP_1 : ag   +   Vi

8.
    mbɨŋ nə lí - gē
    rain fall always
    "It rains."

Vt

NP_1: ag +   Vt + NP_2 : pt

9.
    mɔ̀ŋwà nē à mó   nçǔ sē
    girl the open door the
    "The girl opened the door."

NP_1: ag + Vt + NP_2 : pt

10.
    ngà? nē à bûə bǎm nē
    man the carry bag the
    "The man carried the bag."

NP₁: ag   + Vt + NP₂ : pt

11.
$\qquad$ nwa nə à çū̧ çə̆ sə
woman the wash clothes the
"The woman washed the clothes."

NP₁: ag   + Vt   + NP₂ : loc

12.
$\qquad$ mwembam à lò ntei (nə)
boy   P₁ go market the
"The boy went to the market."

NP₁: ag   +   Vt + NP₂ : pt

13.
$\qquad$ bwiŋ nə à zú nto?o mbăŋ sə
squirrel the eat nut palm-tree the
"The squirrel ate the palm nuts."

Vtt

NP₁: ag +   Vtt   +   NP₂ : pt +   NP₃ : loc.

14.
$\qquad$ mwēmbàm nā à gèsé kĕŋ sə̄ sēmvwē băm sə
boy the (P₁) put pot the inside bag the
"The boy put the pot inside the bag."

NP₁: ag + Vtt + NP₂ : ben + NP₃ : pt

15.
$\qquad$ nwà nā à fá mɔ̀ŋwà nā mɔ̀ nā
woman the give girl the   the
"The woman gave the baby to the girl."

NP₁: ag +   Vtt +   NP₂ : pt + (Prep, NP₃ : loc).

16.
$\qquad$ nwà nə̄ à çū̧   çə̆ sə sēmvwē kwes
woman the wash clothes the inside bucket
"The woman washed the clothes in the bucket."

NP₁: ag + Vtt + NP₂ : pt + (NP₃ : loc).

16.
$\qquad$ mɔ̀ nə̄   sə̄ tá kwēs sə̄ m ndà.
child the (Pᵣ) kick basket in house
"The child is kicking the basket in the house."

NP₁: ag +   Vtt + NP₂ : pt + (NP₃ : ben).

17.
$\qquad$ ŋgwiĕgù nā à fá kwàŋ nā bōhō ndūgū nā
wife the (P₁) give ring the groom."

4.2 Verbal Extensions

These are verbal affixes, especially present in the Bantu group of African languages which are added to the root resulting in a new verb stem (Tamanji, 1981). These verbal extensions are divided into two main categories:

(i) Productive verbal extensions

(ii) Non-productive verbal extensions.

4.2.1 Productive verbal Extensions

Productive verbal extensions are so-called because they can be attributed a meaning and a particular function. They are made up of prefixes that mark tense, aspect and mood. They equally include affixes that affect verb valency.

Extensions that affect verb valency.

The addition of an extension to a verb root can change verb valency by necessitating either the addition of a complement such as object, instrument, locative, benefactive, and so on or the reduction of one or more complements.

Examples in Yamba

Causative

To make something or somebody become different

19. jwí = "to laugh"   jwí sè " cause to laugh"
    ŋwí nə   sé jwí   sè mɔ̄ nè
    person the Pr (cause to laugh) child the
    "The man is making the child laugh"

gbŭ = "to fall"   dùsémá = "to make fall"

Grassfields Bantu languages have been known to employ different verbal extensions to express a variety of meanings and syntactic functions. ....

Yamba on the other hand employs very few verbal extensions. This is due in part, to the generally poor inflectional system of Yamba. In the following pages, we illustrate the few verbal extensions employed in Yamba.

Instrumental

This suffix generally modifies the meaning of a verb so as to imply that the action is done with an instrument of some kind. (generally an inanimate object).

Example :

20 çù = "to wash"   çú bə́ = "wash with"
    sèrá çùgə çə́ bə́ ndzə́p
    "Sera washed dresses with water"

In the above Yamba example, we have the verb root tʃù which is modified by adding -gə to it but the meaning does not change.

Accompaniment

It expresses the idea that some action is performed being accompanied by something or somebody. This notion in Grassfields Bantu languages is marked by a preposition which stands for "with".

Example:

21 tɔ́m = "to send"
    tɔ́m ŋúmɔ̀ bə júmɔ̀ (send somebody with something)

    tɔ́m ŋwà nè
    send book the
    "send the book"

    tɔ́m jì bə ŋwà nè
    send him with book the
    "send him with the book"

4.2.2 Non-Productive Verbal Extensions

These are termed "Non-productive" because they have no effect on verb valency and in most cases have been attributed no meaning or function. It is possible that they are used simply for stylistic effects. It could also be assumed that in languages with dialectal differences, they are used to mark differences between the various dialects.

The verb root is identical with two varieties (Mbem and Gwembə) of Yamba. Only a few exceptions are noticed as in bɛ̀lə and bɛ̀rə. However, the difference is not as a result of the adding of any extension. It may be just of mark differences between the two dialects.

4.3 Verb Categories of Tense, Aspect and Mood

4.3.1 Tense

The description of tenses of African languages still presents serious problems of appropriate terminology. First of all, the existing terminology is merely a conventional designation of certain morphological affixes (of the verb) express besides other verb categories such as aspect or mood. To avoid this terminology dilemma, we shall use the generally used graphic representation of tenses below:

**Fig. 6:** Graphic Representation of Tenses on the time-axis.
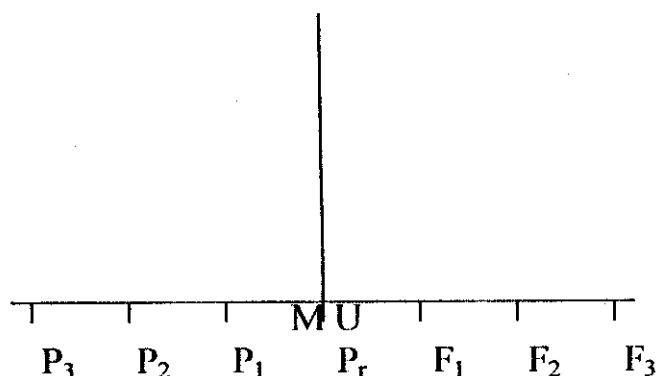
Tense is the linguistic localisation of a given situation (state or action) on the time axis in relation to the moment of utterance (M.U).

Assuming that the time axis moves from left to right we draw the following conclusions:

1. Any situation simultaneous to the moment of utterance will be said to assume Present tense (Pr).

2. Any situation to the right of the central point will be said to assume future tense (F_1, F_2, F_3).

3. Any situation to the left will assume the past tense (P_1, P_2, P_3).

Following this approach we may say that Yamba displays about four (4) different positions on this semantic time axis.

Fig. 7:   **Diagramatic Representation of Yamba Tenses**
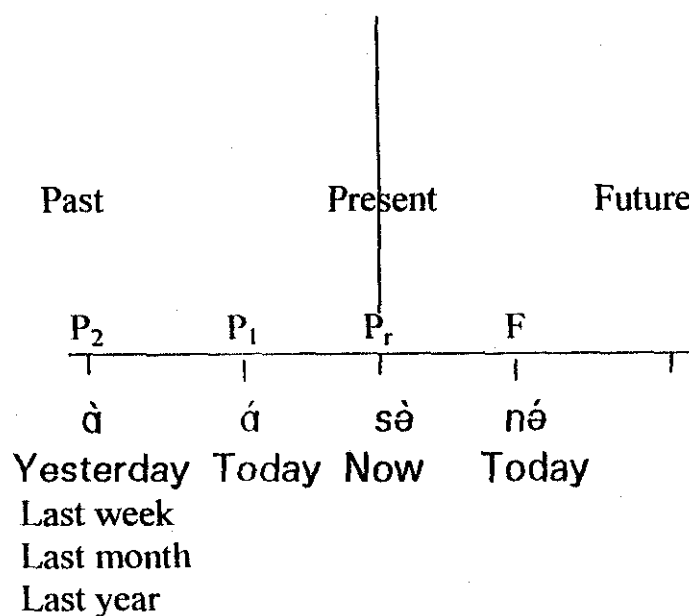
In the diagram above, Yamba has only one form of tense in the present situation (P_r) (sə̀). The immediate past tense is distinguished from the distant past tense by a tone (á) and (à) respectively. It is marked by tone. The future tense has also one main form (nə́). If one wants to speak of an action that will take place in the distant future, he will have to add forms like (zɔ̀ŋ) = tomorrow or (lóà) = next time, some other time. For more precision, he may have to name the particular day, week or month or year.

A few Yamba examples will help to illustrate these various tenses so that we can observe their positions vis-à-vis the verbs.

Examples:

22　**Present Tense (P_r)**

i)　Mèrí sə̀ lá bɛ'ŋ
　　Mary P_r cook food
　　"Mary is cooking food"

Past Tense (P_1, P_2)

ii)　Mèrí zə́ nō
　　Mary kill snake
　　"Mary has killed a snake" (today)

iii)　Mèrí á zə́ nō
　　Mary P_1 kill snake
　　"Mary killed a snake"　(yesterday)

iv)　Mèrí à zə́ nō
　　Mary P_2 kill snake
　　"Mary once killed a snake" (distant past)

Future Tense

v)　Mèrí nə́ zə́ nō
　　Mary F_1 kill snake
　　"Mary will kill a snake."　.　(soon)

In Yamba, the tense occurs after the subject (Mèrí) and before the verb.

4.3.2　Aspect

Aspect deals with the manner in which verbal action is experienced in terms of progression or completion. Tamanji (1991) further goes on to say that aspect is concerned with the duration of an action: complete or incomplete.

Comrie (1976) defines *aspect* in terms of Perfective and Imperfective. In most African languages aspect is marked by a verbal affix which expresses the

manner in which the action is experienced. Types of aspect marked by verbal suffixes are:

a. Perfective

The perfective aspect indicates that the action expressed by a verb has been carried out and has been completed. Comrie distinguishes two types of perfective. They are:

i. Result.

Speaking of the result, he says it is a situation in which the present state is the result of a past action.

Example:

23
      Mèrí sóp ŋgà? né
      Mary stab person the
      "Mary has stabbed the man"

The present state, the wound on the man is as a result of Mary's action.

ii. Recent Past

Here the action in the past is a very recent one.

Example:

24
      Mèrí ló tsə́ ŋgà? ŋgà?
      Mary go just now now
      "Mary has just gone"

b. Imperfective

This type of aspect indicates that the action suggested by the verb is still going on. It is concerned with the internal temporal structure of an action or a state. It generally marks actions which are in progress, (Tamanji 1991).

In many African languages, the Imperfective aspect is marked by a free morpheme whose form varies with tense and mood.

However, in Yamba, the form of the progressive morpheme does not change with tense as in other languages.

Examples:

25

i) Mèrí sə̀ lá bέŋ
    Mary P_r cook food
    "Mary is cooking food."

ii) Mèrí à sə lá bέŋ ŋkpis
    Mary P_1 cook food yesterday
    "Mary was cooking food."

iii) Mèrí nə́ sə́ lá bέŋ ngâ nûm tʃwó
     Mary F_1 cook food when sun set
     "Mary will be cooking food." (in the evening).

c.   Alternative

It expresses the way in which same action is carried out. It indicates that the whole action is being carried out for a very short while.

Example:

26

    Zú bεŋ sə̀ jō
    eat food the small/little
    "Eat the food a little."

d.   Repetitive

This type of aspect modifies the meaning of the verb and shows that the action can be repeated or carried out at the same moment by many people.

Examples:

27

i) Paul à k ŋʃáŋ sə̀ rὲʔ ŋkɵ̆ŋ.
    Paul P_1 cut grass the time Mary.
    "Paul cut the grass several times."

ii) Mèrí bə̀ Paul à kpú́ zɔ́ zɔ́
    Mary and Paul P_1 different different
    "Mary and Paul have died." (one after the other).

e. Quantitative

Here, the object of the verb is plural. That is, many objects are affected by the action inherent in the verb action.

Example:

28

> çù? çə̌ sə̀   çǔ = to wash
> wash dress the
> "Wash the dresses."

Here above, tʃə̌ sə̀ (the dresses) are all affected by one verb (tʃǔ) or one action "to wash" in Yamba.

f. Simultaneously

It expresses the meaning of "together" or "at the same time"

Example:

29

> bwésə̀ sə̀ wá
> children are cry
> "The babies are crying."

g. Distributive

It is very similar to the repetitive but unlike the repetitive, the action has a pause in between the two actions.

Examples:

30

> i) Mèrí lú m' nwé çə̀ jié rɛ̀ ŋkə̌ŋ
>   Mary vomit on dress her time many
>   Mary has vomited on her dress several times."
>
> ii) bwè bə̀bá ŋkə̌ŋ ndzə́ Yaounde bə zím
>   children women many inside Yaounde are pregnant.
>   "Several girls in Yaounde are pregnant."

The pregnancies above did not all begin at the same moment. We all know that they may be at different stages but right now that we are speaking "the girls are pregnant." (at the same time).

4.3.3 Mood

Mood is the speakers' attitude towards his utterances. In many languages mood comprises a number of categories; indicative, imperative, optative, monitory, obligation, possibility, necessity, etc. In most languages, mood is marked by a lexical item, which is independent and is either at the beginning of a sentence or before a verb.

Yamba manifests a number of moods as we shall see in the following examples:

Indicative

31   Mèrí nə̀   dzə̀   mwé
             Mary F_1 (put to birth) child
             "Mary will have a baby"

Conditional

32   ngá Mèrí dzə̀ mwé
             If Mary (put to birth) child
             "If Mary has a baby..."

Optative

33   Mə̀   dzə́m   də̀   Mèrí dzə̀   mwé
             I want (love), that Mary put to birth child
             "I want Mary to have a baby."

Imperative

34   Mèrí   dzə̀   mwé   nə̀này
             Mary (put to birth) child fast
             "Mary should have a baby quickly."

From the above examples Yamba clearly manifests four types of mood. There may be more but these are enough to illustrate the distribution of this category in relation to the verb.

The verb d̠zə̀ (put to birth) remains unchanged whatever the type of mood.

The indicative mood shows that the utterance is full of certainty. "Mary will have a baby." There is no doubt.

The other three types are uncertain, the utterances are just expressing a wish or desire, a command or a condition. It is not certain if the result of the wish (expressed by the verb) will be a successful one.

For a conclusion, we can say that the verb in Yamba in constant all along. It has no affixes, which mark tense, aspect or mood, Yamba not being an inflectional language.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Preliminary Remarks

As we pointed out in the first chapter of this study, previous linguistic studies on Yamba were predominantly phonological. These studies led to the establishment of a phonematic inventory of both Yamba consonants and vowels as well as a prosodic inventory of syllable structures and tone patterns. These initial studies enabled certain linguists to elaborate a Yamba orthographic system which is certainly going to play an important role in the standardisation of the language. A lot of research is going on in the Donga Mantung Division regarding the description and classification of dialects within the various languages, a task that will be followed by the standardisation process. The description and classification of the dialects is incomplete ; there is no uniformity regarding the marking of tones ; and worst of all there is little awareness as to the utility of learning to write Cameroonian languages. As a result of this situation it has not been easy for us to use reliable authentic orthographic data in Yamba. In many cases, we had to use IPA transcription for Yamba data ; in this case we were in conformity with no conventional orthography.

As we shall point out later on, this approach has some disadvantages. However, our aim was not to question or improve upon the previous phonological and orthographic studies; we tried, as much as possible to exploit these previous studies to carry out our morphosyntactic study.

Studying the morphosyntax of any language implies the discovery of units and the rules that govern word formation as well as both the order and forms of the elements that make up a sentence. Our study has revealed to us a number of linguistic features which we have presented according to three dimensions which are, the Yamba basic sentence, the Yamba

noun phrase and the Yamba verb. And, within each of these dimensions we have tried to bring out the striking similarities between Yamba and some well known languages, as well as the striking peculiarities of Yamba in reference to some well known languages. By "well known languages" we mean languages that have already undergone linguistic studies which have already been published.

5.1 The Yamba Basic Sentence

Using the case grammar approach, which exploits verb valancy as well as a bi-parametric approach of description and classification, we came out with the following findings :

- Yamba manifests four types of verbs which are : state verbs (Vbe), one place verbs of action (Vi), two place verbs of action (Vt) and three place verbs of action (Vtt).

- Yamba manifests seven types of participants which are the Agent, the Experiencer, the Item , the Description, the Location and the Beneficiary.

- Yamba, as a result of the above mentioned phenomena, manifests seven basic sentence types as indicated in Table N° 7 (P.28). Two of these sentence types are built around intransitive verbs, two around transitive verbs, two around ditransitive verbs and one around state verbs.

- In Yamba, just like in most languages, the morphosyntax of a given sentence contributes a lot to the meaning of that sentence. Any modification concerning the type, place or form of the elements of a given sentence is likely to change the meaning of the initial sentence.

In Yamba there are three structural indicators at sentence level ; these are ,the verb, including its valancy and meaning, word order and prepositions. And since Yamba is an S.V.O. language type, once we know the meaning of the verb of a sentence it is very easy to identify the other participants and thereby interpret the meaning of the sentence by relying upon word order.

Since this study was initially aimed at basic morphosyntax, we avoided analysing derived sentence structures, especially those that might involve verb valancy modification.

But we have a feeling that future studies on this language will have to examine the link between verb derivation, valancy and morphosyntactic derivation. In many Niger-Congo languages, ability to manipulate verb derivation is almost as important as the ability to manipulate verb inflection. And in this case, a speaker must learn very early to move from basic to derived sentence structures. But this type of study requires a deeper knowledge of the language; our knowledge in Yamba is relatively limited.

In the same light, this study did not leave us room to explore the role played by secondary structure elements such as prepositions and conjunctions. I take the liberty to refer to prepositions as secondary elements of syntax because I am basing my experience on Swahili where the verb valancy is so precise that prepositions are often neutralized: in other words, in Swahili, the prepositional meaning is expressed by the verb. We are not asserting that this situation obtains in Yamba, but the limited number of prepositions in Yamba makes us suspect a similar trend. We feel that more research should be carried on such elements as prepositions and conjunctions. Such a study may require the analysis of longer and more complex sentence structure types, something beyond the scope of this study.

5.2   The Yamba Noun Phrase

Although most Yamba nouns are invariable there are a few nouns that are variable, thereby giving this language the image of a two class type of language. Yamba nouns can be grouped into classes 1a, 1b, and 2. But even then, the number of nouns is very small and the morphological concords are limited to the possessive and demonstrative determiners; unlike what takes place in the narrow Bantu class languages, the Yamba noun classes do not morphologically influence the qualifying adjectives and the verbs. In fact if a researcher makes abstraction of kinship terms the temptation is very great to conclude that Yamba is a classless language.

The Yamba noun phrase is composed of a noun which may stand alone or may act as a nucleus accompanied by one or several satellites which may be either determiners or

qualifying adjectives. As for determiners Yamba manifests four types which are the demonstratives, the possessives, the numerals and the quantifiers. One may be tempted to state that Yamba manifests articles since there are specific words that translate the English article "the". But since the very same words are used to translate the demonstrative determiners, we find it prudent to drop the idea of articles in Yamba. Other languages like Swahili have manifested this delicate problem of the article and in Swahili the idea of the article has been dropped although the definite article can very well be translated by demonstrative determiners. However, we suggest that further research be carried out on Yamba to see if really this language can be accorded articles as determiners .

As for qualifying adjectives these are very limited in number in Yamba as is the case in most Niger-Congo languages . However, Yamba like most Niger-Congo languages makes use of associative as well as relative constructions to replace the qualifying adjectives.

As for structure, the Yamba noun phrase is noun headed or exocentric contrary to English where it is noun ended or endocentric. In this respect Yamba resembles many other. Niger-Congo languages which manifest noun headed noun phrases. When the occasion presents itself only demonstratives and possessives inflect for class.

From a grammatical point of view, Yamba manifests three types of noun phrases, the grammatical subject (NP$_1$), a first complement (NP$_2$), and a second complement (NP$_3$). And as we mentioned earlier on, these surface structures can express seven different deep structure identities which are the Agent, the Patient, the Experiencer, the Item, the Description, the Location and the Beneficiary. These universal features of Yamba render translation work to and from Yamba possible.

5.3   The Yamba Verb

As already stated above, the verb is at the center of the Yamba sentence. It comes after the grammatical subject and is followed by the complements. At the deep structure level, the verb determines the case roles. The verb does not inflect for person but it is

accompanied by isolated tense and aspect indicators. We have [sə̀] for the present, [nə́, á, à] for the past and [nə̀] , [nə] for the future.

Throughout this study we have underlined the central role played by the verb in the Yamba sentence structure. It may therefore seem embarrassing that we treat the verb at the end of our study and even then that we seem to treat it rather superficially. We feel an obligation to explain our attitude and approach. Any normal dog that wants to eat a bone will start by eating the soft meat around the bone. The verb in Yamba, like in most languages, is so complex that it cannot be the first element a researcher should handle. A lot of preparatory work should be undertaken to identify and study the other simpler elements that surround the verb. When such basic features such as the phonology, the orthography, the noun phrases, the structure elements of the sentences have been studied and identified it then becomes possible to isolate the verb for study. And even when we come to the verb examining its morphosyntactic identity, its morphological nature, its semantic components, we note that each of these linguistic features may require a specific study. That is why we may need time to study each of the following features: verb agreement, verb morphology, verb derivation, verb inflection, the categories of mood, the categories of tense and aspect, verb valancy, cohesion, etc. It is precisely because we are aware of the complexity of the verb in Yamba that we decided to touch it last and only superficially. We feel that we need a deeper knowledge of the language and more complex research to tackle the verb with much greater confidence. And we hope that in the mean time a number of important technical problems will have found solution.

One of such technical problems worth mentioning here is the standardisation of Yamba followed by the establishment of a uniform accepted orthography. What constitutes a word in a given language is often a matter of convention. Without such conventions it is very difficult to elaborate any normative grammar which can then be used to teach any language and put it into modern daily use. For example, it is not easy to agree on whether the Yamba tense/aspect indicators [sè, né, á, à] are separate words or affixes of verbs. Such a question is fundamental in the description of Yamba and especially in the teaching

of a Yamba normative grammar. And we should not forget that in normative grammar conventions may at time weigh more than unstable experimental linguistic theories. That is why we conclude by recommending that all encouragement should be given to the Yamba language committees to take decisions on basic conventions which will make writing more effective so as to produce didactic material for the teaching of Yamba wherever it may be required.

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