



A Descriptive Grammar of Bafut – a Grassfields Bantu Language of Cameroon

Pius N. Tamanji

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A Descriptive Grammar of Bafut, a Grassfields Bantu language spoken by approximately 105,000 people in Cameroon (as of 2005), integrates in a single volume some of the major areas of the structure of the Bafut language that have been intriguing to researchers in the past. The language is a part of the geographically defined group of languages in the grassfields of Cameroon with to some extent Bantu-like characteristics (Bantuid classified). The introduction identifies the language and its speakers. Chapters 1 and 2 cover the sound system and noun classification while chapter 3 provides an interesting account of noun formation processes including an interesting derivational process which involves the use of a negation prefix. Chapter four contains a detailed description of the pronoun system and chapter 5 covers the noun phrase with an impressive categorization of genitive constructions. Chapter 6 describes verb morphology with a detailed and interesting coverage of verb tone classes and verb extensions. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the tense system, the interaction between tense, mood and negation, as well as the role of deficient verbs in marking tense, aspect, and mood. Chapter 9 begins with a presentation of familiar prepositions in the language and proceeds to show that other prepositional and adverbial notions are marked by complex structures derived from body parts and related plain nouns. Chapter 10 describes the formation of questions and relates this to processes involved in focus and relativisation. Chapter 11 describes complex constructions beginning with the familiar verb serialization structures in Bantu and moving on to consecutivisation, coordination and subordination. Chapter 12 concludes the book with a presentation of what the author calls curiosities in Bafut grammar. These curiosities, which constitute phenomena with an areal scope in the Grassfields region of Cameroon, include homogeneity, reduplication, and anaphora.

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