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## **EDITORIAL**

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal point for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, seventeen (17) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

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Moguo Fotso Francine



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## An Overview of Desemanticization of Verbs into Future Tense Markers in some Bantu Languages

### Abstract

*In this paper, we argue that future markers in some Bantu languages of Cameroon evolved from constructions that signal movement towards a goal and require that the verb stem bears appropriate tense and directional marking. We go further to demonstrate that in these languages, a lexical morpheme that often occurs in an environment in which a certain inference is made can be associated with that inference to such an extent that the inference becomes part of the explicit meaning of the grammatical morpheme. According to Bybee (1994), desemanticization theory begins with the observation that grammatical morphemes develop gradually out of lexical morphemes or a combination of lexical morphemes. Thus, the source meaning of lexical morphemes determines the grammaticalization path that the grammatical morpheme will travel in its semantic development. The desemanticization process holds that in addition to their lexical meaning, some verbs receive a grammatical function and eventually develop into a grammatical morpheme. Based on the source determination hypothesis, we advocate that the development of future markers in these languages is characterized by the dynamic coevolution of meaning and form.*

**Keywords:** grammaticalization, grammatical morpheme, source determination hypothesis, semantic development

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### 1.1 Introduction

This paper uses an approach to grammaticalization that focuses on the development of grammatical elements from lexical items. It explores the sources of simple future forms in Grassfield Bantu languages. Of interest in this paper is our attempt to pinpoint the source from which these future makers evolve and the path they follow to move from lexical to grammatical elements. The languages involved in this study are Grassfield Bantu languages of different sub-groups spoken in the North-West region of Cameroon

namely Bafut, ηwe, Kwa', and Awing and in the West region of Cameroon namely: Ghómálá', Nda'nda', Ngombale, Muṅgaka, Yemba, Ngomba, Ngyembəŋ.

An approach to grammaticalization is used and aims at (i) describing the way some grammatical forms arise and develop through space and time and (ii) explaining why they are structured the way they are. This study also attempts to identify the points of similarity and difference among the target languages as far as the development of the future tense markers is concerned. The paper is organized as follows: section 1 presents the framework of grammaticalization used in the analysis. Section 2 handles the path of development for the future markers in some languages. Section 3 deals with the future grammatical elements of the selected Grassfield Bantu languages; it sheds more light on the source of future forms, the processes and mechanisms of change that trigger their development.

## 1.2 Grammaticalization frame

This section focuses on the definition of grammaticalization. Mechanisms and processes involved in grammaticalization are also discussed.

### 2.1 Definition of grammaticalization

In the history of grammaticalization studies, three main phases can be distinguished. In the first phase, it is claimed that grammatical complexity and abstract vocabulary derive historically from concrete lexemes. In the second phase, it is claimed that changes from lexical to grammatical forms is considered as an essential component of comparative grammar. In the third phase, spatial expressions and the former serve as structural templates for the latter.

With his slogan "*Today's morphology is yesterday's syntax*", Givon argues that in order to understand language structure, one must have knowledge of its earlier stages of development and therefore opens a new perspective for understanding grammar. In the course of the 1970s and 1980s, a number of studies appeared based on the following assumptions:

- (i) Language is a historical product and should be accounted first of all with reference to historical forces that are responsible for its present structure
- (ii) Findings on grammaticalization offer more comprehensive explanations than findings confined to synchronic analysis could offer
- (iii) The development of grammatical categories is unidirectional leading from concrete/lexical to abstract/grammatical meanings. (Traugott 1980, Heine and Reh 1984, Lehman 1982, Bybee 1985)

Authors adhering to this paradigm describe grammaticalization as the development from lexical to grammatical and from grammatical to even more grammatical structures. Others like Meillet (1912) claim that there are two processes through which new grammatical forms emerge: one is analogy, where new paradigms come into being through final resemblance to already established paradigms. The second way in which new grammatical forms come into being is through grammaticalization. Heine and Reh (1984:15) define grammaticalization "as an evolution whereby linguistic units lose in its semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic freedom, and phonetic substance respectively". They distinguish between grammaticalization and reanalysis: the former is concerned with the evolution of lexical or grammatical morphemes whereas the latter is concerned with the evolution of syntactic or pragmatic structures. In other words, one can say that grammaticalization has both a synchronic and a

diachronic feature. Furthermore, researchers claim that grammaticalization is essentially unidirectional in nature but reanalysis is not necessarily so.

## 2.2 Grammaticalization mechanisms

Technically, grammaticalization of linguistic expressions involves four interrelated mechanisms.

(i) Desemanticization or bleaching or semantic reduction: loss in meaning. The semantic content of the lexical item undergoing grammaticalization is reduced that is bleached out of lexical meaning. Desemanticization results from the use of forms for concrete meanings which are reinterpreted in specific context as more abstract meanings.

(ii) Extension or context generalization. Lexical items undergoing grammaticalization tend to be used in new contexts that is, a linguistic item can be used in new context where it could not be used previously.

(iii) Decategorialization: loss in morphosyntactic properties (cliticization, affixation). After having its meaning bleached, the word undergoing grammaticalization undergoes a morphosyntactic process, namely decategorialization. It is applied to the set of processes by which a noun or a verb loses its morphosyntactic properties in the process of becoming a grammatical element. Sometimes, both the grammatical morpheme and the lexical element from which it arose coexist in the language but in some cases, the lexical item disappears from the language

(iv) Erosion or phonetic reduction: loss of phonetic substance. The words undergoing grammaticalization are also subjected to phonological processes such as erosion, assimilation, loss, and eventually fusion. All these processes lead to a drastic reduction in the phonological form of the grammaticalized words such that the produced forms “require less muscular effort” (Bybee et.al 1994). Also, it is important to note here that parallel to semantic reduction, phonological reduction, continues to take place throughout the life of the gram

Each of the following mechanisms is concerned with a different aspect of language structure or language use: (i) relates to semantics, (ii) to pragmatics, (iii) to morphosyntax and (iv) to phonetics. The following table gives an overview of this correspondence.

	<b>Mechanisms of grammaticalization</b>	<b>Aspects of language structure</b>
(i)	Desemanticization	Semantics
(ii)	Extension	Pragmatics
(iii)	Decategorialization	Morphosyntax
(iv)	Erosion	Phonetics

Each of these mechanisms gives rise to an evolution which can be transcribed in the form of a three-stage model, called *overlap model* (Heine 1993:48-53). The stages concerned are as follows:

- (i) There is a linguistic expression A that is recruited for grammaticalization.
- (ii) This expression acquires a second use pattern B, with the effect that there is ambiguity between A and B.
- (iii) Finally, when A is lost, that is, B remains.

The result of this process is that grammaticalization exhibits a *chain-like structure*. Note that all instances of grammaticalisation proceed to stage (iii); it may happen that

the process ends at stage (ii); however, once stage (iii) is reached, B tends to be conventionalized that is, it turns into a new grammatical category.

Another important mechanism of change in grammaticalization is *habituation* (Bybee, 1994). The force of a word or phrase that is repeated over and over is diminished. In other words, the more frequently a word or phrase is used, the more likely that it will undergo grammaticalization. Thus, habituation can cause a word or phrase to be bleached and, as a result, receive inferential meaning. The second mechanism is *conventionalization of implicature* (pragmatic inference). In this type of change, if a particular pattern of inferences is realized in a grammatical construction, the hearer then comes to associate these inferences with the meaning of the construction.

### 2.3 The paths of development for future markers in Grassfield Bantu languages

In this section, I will discuss the paths of development for the future tense markers in some selected Grassfield Bantu languages. Claims have been made that the future is marked in the same way in most world languages and it develops the same shades of meaning suggesting that there is a limited number of sources out of which the future can develop. According to Bybee et al (1994:159), future in the languages of the world most often develops from “constructions expressing obligation or necessity, desire, and movement or intention”. In the same vein, Trask (1996:144) lists the verbs that develop into future markers: verbs meaning “go”, “come”, “want”, “must”. In addition, the analysis of the data taken from the selected Grassfield languages brings about evidence that goes in the opposite direction of the claim that only the above-cited verbs can develop into future markers. To these, some Grassfield Bantu languages develop future markers from other verbs such as “go away”, “leave” “sleep”, “stay”, “remain”, “spend the night”, “swell”, “last”. In this section, reference is made to two paths that have been identified for the rise of future morphemes in the Grassfield Bantu languages: the movement path (go, come, leave, go away), the state path (sleep, stay, spent night, remain).

#### 2.3.1 Lexical sources to primary futures

One problem in identifying the properties of lexical items that are candidates for grammaticalization is the problem of determining at exactly what point I can say that grammaticalization has begun. In our study we have relatively reliable information about the lexical sources of twelve primary futures, that is, those grammatical elements which code for future as indicated in the table below. In this table, verbs are divided into three main groups column 1 shows the languages using particular verbs to form the future and in column 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are found the different futures and their number of occurrences.

**Table 1: Lexical source of future markers**

N°	Language	Sources				
<b>A- Movement verbs</b>						
<b>1- Come</b>						
		F0	F1	F2	F3	F4
1.	<i>Yemba</i>	/	come	/	/	/
2.	<i>Ngomba</i>	/	come	/	/	/
3.	<i>Ngyembɔŋ</i>	/	come	/	/	/
4.	<i>Fe'fe'</i>	/	/	come	Come	come

5.	<i>ɲwe</i>	/	come	/	/	/
6.	<i>Bafut</i>	/	/		Come	/
7.	<i>Awing</i>		come			
<b>2- go /go away /leave</b>						
	<i>Gh ɔm</i>	go	/	/	/	/
	<i>Kwa</i>	/	go	go	Go	/
	<i>Nda'nda'</i>	/	go	/	/	/
	<i>Ngombale</i>	/	go	/	/	/
	<i>Mungaka</i>	/	go	/	/	/
	<i>Bafut</i>	/	/	go away/leave	go away	/
	<i>Awing</i>	/	/	go away	/	/
<b>B- Action verbs</b>						
<b>1- Do</b>						
1.	<i>Yemba</i>	/	do	/	/	/
2.	<i>Ghɔmála'</i>	/	do	/	/	/
3.	<i>Ngomba</i>	/	do	/	/	/
4.	<i>Ngymbɔŋ</i>	/	do	/	/	
5.	<i>Fe'fe'</i>	/	do	/	/	/
6.	<i>ɲwe</i>	/	do	/	/	/
7.	<i>Bafut</i>	/	do/make	/	/	/
<b>2- To swell</b>						
1.	<i>Yemba</i>	/	/	/	Swell	/
2.	<i>Ngymbɔŋ</i>	/	/	/	Swell	/
3.	<i>ɲwe</i>	/	/	/	Swell	/
<b>C- State verbs</b>						
<b>1- To sleep</b>						
1.	<i>Yemba</i>	/	/	/	/	Spend the night
2.	<i>Ngomba</i>	/	/	/	Spend the night	Spend the night
3.	<i>Ngymbɔŋ</i>	/	/	/	/	sleep
4.	<i>ɲwe</i>	/	/	/	/	Spend the night
5.	<i>Kwa</i>	/	/	/	/	Spend the night
6.	<i>Nda'nda'</i>	/	/	/	Sleep	sleep
7.	<i>Ngombale</i>	/	/	/	/	Spend the night
8.	<i>Mungaka</i>	/	/	/	Sleep	Spent the night
9.	<i>Ghɔmála'</i>	/	sleep	/	/	/
<b>2- Stay</b>						
1.	<i>Ghɔmála'</i>	/	/	stay	/	/
<b>3- To remain</b>						
1.	<i>Ghɔmála'</i>	/	/	/	Remain	/
2.	<i>Awing</i>	/	/	/	Remain	/
<b>4- Last</b>						
1.	<i>Ghɔmála'</i>	/	/	/	/	last

This table reveals that the lexical sources of future markers are few and remarkably consistent cross-linguistically. The most frequent sources are movement verb constructions with four futures having their sources in constructions with “come” and six constructions with “go”. Next most frequent are constructions with “sleep” and

related meanings like “spend the night” are more attested than others. Contrary to the study done by Bybee et al. (1994) on 119 primary futures where agent-oriented sources of desire, obligation, and ability were part of the lexical sources of future markers, the languages under study in this paper do not have such sources. This can be explained by the fact that in Grassfield Bantu languages independent verbs expressing volition, desire, or obligation do not exist. Instead, combination of elements is made in order to mark obligation or desire. Below is an example of how to express obligation and desire in Ghomálá’.

- (1a) **gê wə tʃóŋ ná tsû msě**  
 I Prog look Inf eat corn fufu  
 ‘I want to eat corn fufu’
- (b) **ó gə tsú msé**  
 you will (F0) eat corn fufu  
 ‘You must eat corn fufu’

From these examples, we observe that Ghomálá’ does not have a specific verb to express either obligation or desire. Desire is expressed through the addition of the progressive marker and the verb “to look” with the overall meaning of “looking forward to something”. Obligation on its own is expressed using the verb “to go” which is also used to express future and is the basic form for future morpheme marking in the language.

Another important remark about the sources of these future makers in these languages is that they all fall only under the category of verbs contrary to Bybee’s study where temporal adverbs also constitute sources. In the following section, I am going to illustrate how taken together, evidence of lexical sources and retention uses from earlier stages of a grammatical element’s life history which allows us to trace the principal development pathways for future.

### 2.3.2 Pathways to future

As I said previously, distinct lexical sources tend to converge in grammaticalization paths. I hypothesize that all futures go through a stage of functioning to express the intention, first of the speaker and later the agent of the main verb. The meanings that feed the future path of these languages are the meanings that appropriately function in statements that imply an intention on the part of the speaker. This implication of intention later becomes part of the meaning of the grammatical element. According to Bybee (1984:159), future in the languages of the world most often develops from “constructions expressing obligation or necessity, desire and movement”. In this section reference is made to two paths of development that have been identified for the rise of future morphemes in the selected Grassfield Bantu languages: the *movement* path and the *state* path

The data collected from these languages show that six languages have their futures descending from “come” and six have theirs descending from “go”. These verbs are also known as motion verbs. The change is made possible by the fact that there is an inference of futurity purposiveness. The constructions into futures are somewhat more direct, producing fewer other uses along the way. The semantics of “movement toward” constructions imply movement in time as well as space, making the transition to future easier. In the languages under study, both the verb “to go” and the verb “to come”; while six of them use exclusively the motion verb “to go”, the six others use the motion verb “to come” and there is one language, Bafut which portrays a mixture of the use of

both verbs. Some of these languages have also added another lexical item to the motion verb in order to mark future (this will be studied in section 3). Thus, this path of development for future markers is as follows.

### 3.1 Movement path

Movement towards a goal > intention > future

In future constructions, the future element developed via the combination of the motion verb and another verb which is generally the one carrying the intention of the speaker. This is the case in *Ghómálá'* where the future markers are a combination of the verb “to go” and another verb which determines the intention of the speaker.

- (2a) **ɸjǎ ɸɔ ɸə né ná'**  
 we F1 cook soup  
 ‘We will (today) cook soup’
- (b) **é ɸɔ tí jó kwá pá'**  
 he F2 Adv build house  
 ‘He will build a house tomorrow’
- (c) **ɸjǎ ɸɔ tɸwǎ tsá ɸəfə kápləm**  
 we F3 plant maize dry season  
 ‘We will plant dry season maize’
- (d) **ɸjǎ ɸɔ lá' kwíɸɸǎ ɸúɸ jǎɸ**  
 we F4 change world this  
 ‘We will change this world’

We observe that the future element is made up of two elements, the motion verb “go” and other verbs with the following meanings.

- ɸə “to do”
- tí “to sleep”
- tɸwǎ “to stay/remain”
- lá' “to last”

These elements express respectively F1, F2, F3, F4. That is immediate, recent, remote and distant future and it is these verbs that carry the intention of the speaker, that is, if there is an omission of this second item, the reader will still express a future action but yet will not situate the listener about the exact time the action will take place. For example when the speaker wants to express an action that will take a night before being realized, then he uses the verb to “go” accompanied by the verb to “sleep”. If he wants to express an action that will last for some time, he uses the verb to “go” plus the verb to “stay” or to “remain”.

### 3.2. State path

Some languages like Yemba, *ɸɸyembɔɸ*, *ɸwe* use verbs like “swell” others like *kwa'*, *ngomba*, *ɸwe*, *ngombale*, *muɸgaka* use “spend the night” to express the intention of the author but this is not done through combinations as in *Ghómálá'*. This verb is used alone and carries along movement and the intention of the speaker.

#### Yemba

- (3a) **ndɔɸmɔ lu ɸfé ɸkìɸɸiɸè**  
 ndogmo swell eat banana  
 ‘Ndogmo will eat banana’
- Kwa'**

- (b) **ndɔŋmɔ ga zɔ ŋguə**  
 Ndogmo spend the night eat banana  
 ‘Ndogmo will eat banana’

### 3.2.1 The future elements in the Grassfield Bantu languages

This section discusses the various properties of the future elements in the Grassfield languages, properties such as (i) their position with respect to the verb, (ii) their path of development and (iii) the processes and mechanisms involved in their development. Contrary to other languages where the lexical verb is the one grammaticalized, in Grassfields Bantu languages the lexical element which is grammaticalized meets another form. In general, this form is the basic form and the first process occurring is fusion of the two elements and it is during this fusion that there can be erosion of part of an element where the structure of the language demands. The first part will discuss languages whose future element is made up of just an element and the second part will be dedicated to the languages whose future markers have been realized via the channel of verb-verb serialization.

The general observation of this first group of languages is that all the future elements are monosyllabic with a CV structure and we also observe that the consonant (g or gh) is constant in almost all the verbs. Due to such consistency, these verbs could be considered the source verbs of the proto-Bantu form. For the F1, all the languages have their future derived from either the motion verb “go” or “come”. These future markers are not affixes, they are positioned before the verb but not associated to the verb, unlike some Nile Nubian languages where the future marker is attached to the verb stem. This is the case of Mahas (Ayoub 1968:52; Werner1987:151) which has a future prefix *fa-* or *f-* (before a vowel) attached to the verb stem.

- (4a) **ay fa-kabir**

I fut- eat

‘I will eat’

- (b) **ay fa-tokkir**

I fut- shake

‘I will shake’

Heine (2003) talks about the semantic development in the development of grammaticalization where three main models have been proposed:

- (i) The bleaching model where the development of a grammatical element entails a loss in semantic content of the item concerned. One component of meaning (a) is lost while the second component is retained.

ab>b

- (ii) The loss-and-gain model where while one component of meaning (a) gets lost, another component (c) is added

ab>bc

- (iii) The implicature model is based on the assumption that grammaticalization may not only involve the addition of a new component but also the loss of the original component

ab>bc>cd

He goes further to say that “the three models tend to be portrayed as being mutually exclusive, and that as a matter of fact they are not; rather, the bleaching model can be said to be contained in the loss-and-gain model, which again is contained in the implicature model”

He suggests that the bleaching model is the most basic one, which is the *sine qua non* model for grammaticalization to take place.

Thus, the F1 of the languages under study can be said to have undergone the bleaching model and the loss-and-gain model in the sense that the motion verbs have lost their semantic content but have also eventually gained semantic extension.

In an attempt to offer an integrated approach to the multiple changes that constitute grammaticalization, Bybee (2003) focuses on the role repetition plays in the various changes that a grammaticizing construction undergoes. He argues for a new definition of grammaticalization, one which recognizes the crucial role of repetition in grammaticalization and characterizes it as the process by which a frequently used sequence of words or morphemes becomes automated as a single processing unit. He also argues that frequent repetition plays an important role in the changes that take place in grammaticalization. Heine (1994) makes a case for regarding the process of grammaticalization as ritualization, citing the following aspects of ritualization, all of which are as the result of repetition: *habituation* results from repetition and depletes a cultural object or practice of its force and often its original significance as well; repetition leads to the *automatization* of a sequence of units, repetition also leads to the *reduction of form* through the weakening of the individual gestures encapsulated in the act, and through the reorganization of a series of formerly separate gestures into one automated unit; and *emancipation* occurs as the original, more instrumental function of the practice gives way to a more symbolic function inferred from the context in which it occurs.

Two methods of counting frequency are relevant for linguistic studies: one method yields *token frequency* and the other *type frequency*. Token or text frequency is the frequency of occurrence of a unit, usually a word or morpheme, in running text. Type frequency refers to the dictionary frequency of a particular pattern, such as a stress pattern, an affix, etc. For instance, English past tense is expressed in several different ways, but the expression with the highest type frequency is the suffix *-ed*, which occurs on thousands of verbs. The notion of type frequency can also be applied to grammaticizing constructions by counting the different lexical items with which a construction can be used.

This can therefore explain the choice of these two lexical items (go and come) in Grassfield Bantu languages as being more appropriate to the change to future markers. Grammaticalized expressions have inherent meaning derivable from the meanings of their component parts. It is this inherent meaning that is said to be bleached as grammaticalization proceeds.

The development of the future markers in the second group of languages has been achieved via the channel of compounding: verb-verb compounding and F0-verb compounding. The verb-verb compounding is a process of future marking found in Ghomálá' where all the future markers are the appanage of the combination of the motion verb "go" to other verbs that give details about the exact time the event will take place in the future. However, the motion verb is optional even though the majority of the speakers always tend to use it especially when precision has to be made. Following is an example of a verb-verb compounding to form a future tense marker.

- (5) **Ghomálá'**  
é gɔ tí sók mké

he go sleep wash plates  
 ‘He will wash the plates’

In such a construction the second verb carries the markers of the tense and person number; the first verb carries no markers. The scenario accounting for the way this future form has arisen is particular because of the nature of the verbs involved in the process. Owing to the fact that the verbs with which we are dealing here are monosyllabic verbs, after the verb had desemanticized or bleached and that its semantic content had radically reduced, there is no phonological reduction, the verbs keep their original form. However, the form is reduced to a future tense marker even though the language has not yet accepted the writing of tense markers in the language as a single word because the motion verb being optional has not yet been removed from its position next to the main verb. In conclusion, future tenses in Ghòmálá’ go through the following: (i) desemanticization, extension and decategorialization thus leading to what we mention above as the bleaching model. ab>b

But we note that the source lexical items have not disappeared from the language, they still exist as lexical verbs in the language. Thus both grammaticalized elements and the lexical verb coexist: in this example we see that the verb to sleep is used in a past action and still keeps its sense and meaning.

(6) Ghòmálá’  
 é é tí nǎŋ gó sǎkú  
 he P1sleep then go school  
 ‘He slept and went to school’

As far as the F0-verb compounding is concerned, we realize that in Bafut, there is a basic morpheme for the future marker to which is added other verbs in order to form the other forms of future. The F0 is “ká” which has no lexical meaning and the verbs *ɣilǎ* “make/do”, *lǎ* “go away” and *jǎ* “come” are combined to form respectively the F1, F2 and F3.

(7) à kǎlǐ lǎgì kǎrì  
 he F1 take ring  
 “He will take a ring”

The following scenario might account for the way the future forms have arisen in a construction involving a F0-verb compound in Bafut:

(a) *ɣilǎ* “to do” is desemanticized or bleached such that its semantic content is radically reduced: an intention meaning and a future meaning developed

(b) This is accompanied by phonological reduction: syllable erosion reduces the form by truncating the first syllable (e.g. *ɣilǎ* < *lǎ*). the resultant form is exposed to vowel harmony such that the vowel changes from “ǎ” to “ǐ”

(c) As a result of phonological reduction, the remnant form is reduced to a future tense marker.

(d) The verb *ɣilǎ* has lost its syntactic properties: it is no longer an independent verb in the F0-V compounding construction. But note that the source lexical item has not disappeared from the language. It still exists as a lexical verb in the language.

Thus, all the above cited verbs undergo the same process except that of phonological reduction due to the fact that the verbs involved in the combination are monosyllabic verbs, they are therefore combined to the F0 without any change.

(8) à kǎlǒ lǎgì kǎrì  
 he F2 take ring

“He will take a ring”

Unlike the Ghómálá’ basic form which is optional, the F0 in Bafut is not, its presence is compulsory and is part of the future marker.

Moreover, the claim that the course of grammaticalization is unidirectional is viable in Grassfield Bantu languages. Bybee (2001) views unidirectionality as a situation whereby

*Nouns and verbs lose their categorical status and become prepositions, auxiliaries and other grammatical forms. Free elements become more restricted and fuse with other elements... The reverse directions are rarely attested.*

Thus verbs undergoing grammaticalization cannot undergo the reverse situation; as future markers obtained via compounding cannot be used to form or to derive another element in the language. On the contrary this new element formed via grammaticalization will have the tendency to continue its progression as the last stage of grammaticalization to attain is the affixal status. The process that could instead have the tendency to hold in Grassfield Bantu languages is *polygrammaticalization* where it may happen that one and the same source form gives rise to more than one grammatical category. This is the case in Ghómálá’ where the motion verb to “go” is also use to mark obligation.

- (9)     ó gɔ sú ne jě  
           you go weed farm that  
           “You must weed that farm”

### 3.2.2 The similarities and the differences in the development of future markers in the Grassfield Bantu languages

The observation of the data provided in these languages show that they have a different evolution path. While some simply use the lexical item grammaticalized as future marker others use these lexical items in addition to a general form with which they combine to form the future tense marker. Thus, in Bafut and in Ghómálá’ we have what is called the general future; in Bafut this morpheme does not have a lexical meaning whereas in Ghómálá’ this morpheme is the verb to “come” which appears in all the forms of the future markers as a base. Note here that this form alone can be used to express future but with no precision about the time of the future, so the other grammaticalized verbs are added to it in order to shed more light about the exact time of the action. In the tables below, we summarize the way future tense markers are organized in these different Grassfield Bantu languages. Note here that for the sake of space, in the following tables, the terms will be abbreviated as follows (Des) for desemanticization, (Ext) for extension, (Dec) for decategorialization, (Ero) for erosion, (TM) for tense marker

**Table 2: Evolution of the F1**

Processes		Des	Ext	Dec	Ero	TM
Languages/Sources						
Yemba	ɣu “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	ɣu
Ngomba	ɣo “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	ɣo
Ngyembɔŋ	ɣúo “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	ɣúo
Fe’fe’	gú “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	gú
Ōwe	ɣu “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	ɣu
Kwa’	ga “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	ga

Processes Languages/Sources		Des	Ext	Dec	Ero	TM
Yemba	ʃù “come”	✓	✓		x	ʃù
Ngomba	tə “come”	✓	✓		x	tə
Ngyembəŋ	tó “come”	✓	✓		x	tó
Fe’fe’	sí “come”	✓	✓		x	sí
Ōwe	ʃu “come”	✓	✓		x	ʃu
Kwa’	gá “come”	✓	✓		x	gá
Nda’nda’	dí “sleep”	✓	✓		x	dí
Ngombale	ɣu “do”	✓	✓		x	ɣu
Muŋgaka	di “go”	✓	✓		x	di
Ghəməlá’	gɔ tí “go + sleep”	✓	✓		x	gɔ tí
Bafut	ɣilə “do/make”	✓	✓		✓	kálɿ
Awing	lòə “go away”	✓	✓		x	ló
Nda’nda’	ga “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	ga
Ngombale	gó “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	gɔ
Muŋgaka	gié “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	gié
Ghəməlá’	gɔ “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	gɔ
Bafut	ká	x	x	x	x	ká
Awing	jíə “come”	✓	✓	✓	✓	jí

**Table 3: Evolution of F2**

**Table 4: Evolution of the F3**

Processes Languages/Sources		Des	Ext	Dec	Ero	TM
Yemba	du “swell”	✓	✓	✓	x	la
Ngomba	la “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	la
Ngyembəŋ	lu “swell”	✓	✓	✓	x	lu
Fe’fe’	sí “come”	✓	✓	✓	x	sí
Ōwe	lù “swell”	✓	✓	✓	x	lù
Kwa’	ga “go”	✓	✓	✓	x	gá
Nda’nda’	dí “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	dí
Ngombale	ɣu “do”	✓	✓	✓	x	ɣu
Muŋgaka	di “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	di
ghəməlá’	gɔ tʃwə “go + stay”	✓	✓	✓	x	gɔ tʃwə
Bafut	lɔ “leave/go away”	✓	✓	✓	✓	kálɔ
Awing	lá’ə “leave/go away”	✓	✓	✓	✓	lá’ə

**Table 5: Evolution of the F4**

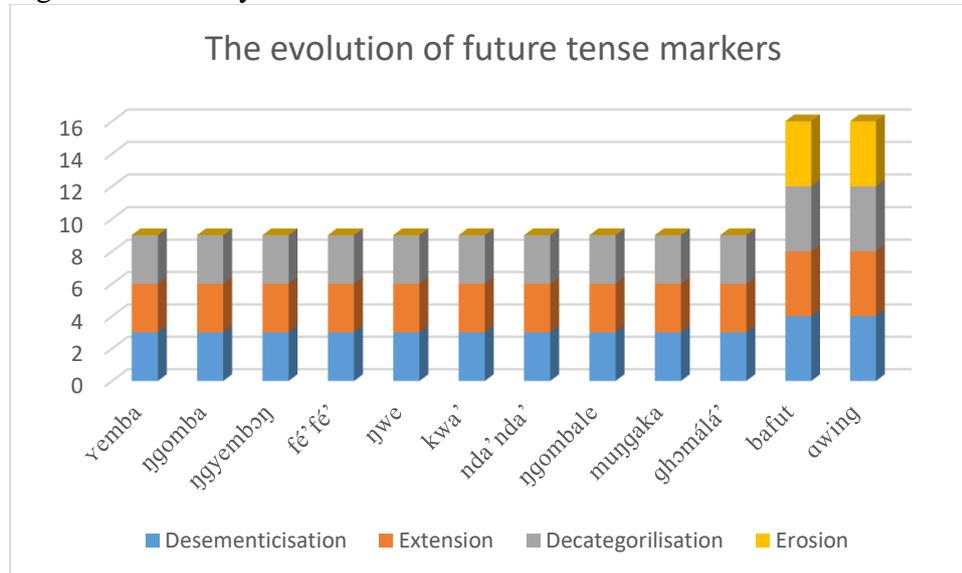
Processes Languages/Sources		Des	Ext	Dec	Ero	TM
Yemba	lá’ “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	lá’
Ngomba	lá’ “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	lá’
Ngyembəŋ	lá’ “sleep”	✓	✓	✓	x	lá’
Fe’fe’	sí “come”	✓	✓	✓	x	sí

Dwe	lá' "spend the night"	✓	✓	✓	x	lá'
Kwa'	lá' "spend the night"	✓	✓	✓	x	lá'
Nda'nda'	dí "sleep"	✓	✓	✓	x	dí
Ngombale	la' "spend the night"	✓	✓	✓	x	la'
Mungaka	ná' "spend the night"	✓	✓	✓	x	ná'
Ghómálá'	gɔ la' "go + last"	✓	✓	✓	x	gɔ la'
Bafut	ʒi "come"	✓	✓	✓	✓	kájí
Awing	lòè lá'	✓	✓	✓	✓	lò lá'a

From these tables, we clearly see the difference in the evolution of these languages as we move from one language to another. The result of this evolution is that grammaticalization exhibits a *chain-like structure*. Note that all instances of grammaticalisation proceed to stage 4; only Bafut and Awing proceed to this stage. It may happen that the process ends at stage 3 as it is the case with the other languages under study. This is clear proof that stage 4 needs more time to be achieved compared to the other stages and that these languages might still be on their way to attaining stage 4. However, once stage 3 is reached, the future tense marker tends to be conventionalized that is, it turns into a new grammatical category.

The examination of such evolution can lead to a reclassification of these language as they all belong to the Ngemba group with Bafut and Awing belonging to the subgroup A due to the fact that their future markers follow the same path of evolution and the others can be classified under subgroup B due to the fact that their future markers follow the same evolution path as languages of the Ngemba group. The following graph summarizes the evolution of the future markers of these languages.

Figure 1: summary of the evolution of future markers:



From this graph it is clear that not all if not majority of Grassfield languages after their semantic reduction have not yet reach the stage of the phonetic reduction as this stage is gradual and continues throughout the life of the gram. Thus, only Bafut and Awing out of the twelve languages have reached this stage.

### Conclusion

According to the above-stated arguments, we can come up with the following findings. Grassfield Bantu languages have future markers some with a form that has completed

the process of grammaticalisation and others whose grammaticalisation process is still going on. This is the case of Ghómálá' and Bafut which still have disyllabic words as future markers. As for the grammaticalization processes, the future forms in Ghómálá' and Bafut have undergone two processes: desemanticization or bleaching, decategorialization and phonological reduction for Bafut. *Habituation* and *inference* are operative mechanisms in the development of future elements.

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