

TONAL POLARITY AND COMPOUND NOUNS IN SHUPAMEM

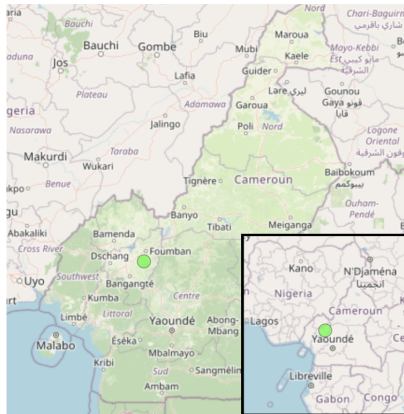
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LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Shupamem is an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language of the Western Province of central Cameroon spoken by approximately 420,000 speakers (Eberhard et al., 2021)



LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Shupamem is a tonal language that exhibits four contrastive surface tones (Nchare (2012); Markowska (2020)):

ka ‘onion’ (L)

ka ‘fry.IMP’ (H)

ka ‘remove.IMP’ (LH)

ka ‘may’ (HL)

The data presented here are original and have been collected from one native speaker of Shupamem, Abdoulaye Laziz Nchare.

TONAL SYSTEM

Almost all Shupamem nouns in my database exhibit only level tones (H and L) on the surface. There are a few nouns with contour tones (HL and LH) in citation from: na ‘mother’, wa ‘father’, gato ‘cake’, tele ‘television’.

Except for those sparse cases, contour tones on nouns are observed almost only in derived environments, e.g.:

sasErE ‘European mantis’ + si ‘black’
nsas1 ‘older sibling’ + PL

sasErE si ‘a black Euro. mantis’
sas1 ‘older siblings’

TONAL SYSTEM

Tone plays a significant role in the Shupamem grammar.

noun pluralization

m@mvi ‘goat’

malori ‘rice’

k@m ‘game’

kam ‘crab’

p@mvi ‘goats’

malori ‘rice.PL’

k@m k@m ‘games’

kam kam ‘crabs’

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kam ‘crab’

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TAM marking, e.g. iN-ka ‘to fry’

i na: Nka pEn ‘He is frying fufu.’

i pi ka pEn ‘He fried fufu.’

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syntactic categories: subject vs. object

ndap ndap GaP\$1

m@ "G1 ndap ndap m" a kamErun

house house be-big.PL

1SG like.PAST I house house in Cameroon

‘Houses are big.’

‘I liked houses in Cameroon.’

TONAL SYSTEM

syntactic structures

ADJ + N: kum ‘old’ + kam ‘crab’ kum k^ham ‘old crab’

N + ADJ: kam ‘crab’ + mfE ‘new’ kam mfE ‘new crab’

N + ADJ₂: kam ‘crab’ + par@ ‘crazy’ kam par@ ‘crazy crab’

N + N: kjEt ‘spear’ + p1t ‘war’ kjEt pit ‘war spear’

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syntactic structures

ADJ + N: kum 'old' + kam 'crab' kum k"am 'old crab' H "H

N + ADJ: kam 'crab' + mfE 'new' kam mfE 'new crab' H L

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TONAL SYSTEM

syntactic structures

A. H-tone nouns

ADJ + N: kum 'old' + kam 'crab' kum k["]am 'old crab' H "H
 N + ADJ: kam 'crab' + mfE 'new' kam mfE 'new crab' H L
 N + ADJ₂: kam 'crab' + par@ 'crazy' kam par@ 'crazy crab' H HL
 N + N: kjEt 'spear' + p1t 'war' kjEt pit 'war spear' H HL

B. L-tone nouns

ADJ + N: kum 'old' + pum 'egg' kum pum 'old egg' L L
 N + ADJ: pum 'egg' + mfE 'new' pum mfE 'new egg' L LH
 N + ADJ₂: pum 'egg' + par@ 'crazy' pum par@ 'crazy egg' L LH
 N + N: Nkun 'tail' + Njam 'horse' Nkun Njam 'horse tail' L LH

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position of adjective with respect to a noun influences the tonal changes on that noun

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N + ADJ ₂ : kam 'crab' + par@ 'crazy'	kam par@ 'crazy crab'	H	HL
N + N: kjEt 'spear' + p1t 'war'	kjEt pit 'war spear'	H	HL

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position of adjective with respect to a noun influences the tonal changes on that noun

tonal polarity in nouns preceding adjectives/nouns can be resolved in two ways

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N + ADJ: kam ‘crab’ + mfE ‘new’	kam mfE ‘new crab’	H	L
N + ADJ ₂ : kam ‘crab’ + par@ ‘crazy’	kam par@ ‘crazy crab’	H	HL
N + N: kjEt ‘spear’ + p1t ‘war’	kjEt pit ‘war spear’	H	HL

B. L-tone nouns

ADJ + N: kum ‘old’ + pum ‘egg’	kum pum ‘old egg’	L	L
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position of adjective with respect to a noun influences the tonal changes on that noun

tonal polarity in nouns preceding adjectives/nouns can be resolved in two ways

evidence for adjectives that behave like nouns

OUR CONTRIBUTION

we explored tonal patterns of ADJ+N, N+ADJ, and N+N structures for variety of nouns across all nouns classes

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further research

- KEt adjectives that allow for both position with respect to the noun introduce distinct tonal processes – still a puzzle

ROAD MAP

1. Adjective classification across Grassfields Bantu languages
2. Adjective classification in Shupamem
3. Prenominal adjectives
 - tonal changes on monosyllabic and bisyllabic nouns
4. Postnominal adjectives (true and noun-like)
 - tonal changes on monosyllabic and bisyllabic nouns
5. Compound nouns
 - morpho-syntactic analysis
6. Nouns and adjective modifiers
 - tonal polarity driven by syntactic movement

N + ADJ IN GRASSFIELDS BANTU LANGUAGES

Different position of adjective modifiers with respect to a noun is observed in other Grassfields Bantu languages closely related to Shuapemem. For example, Bambalang (Wright, 2009), Bafanji (Hamm, 2013), Bafut (Tamanji, 2009), Mmen (Möller et al., 2014) differentiate between true and derived adjectives:

true adjectives

either follow or precede the noun, e.g. from Bambalang

ntaaN	NoN	mb@ga	fE
tall	person	njama njama	fresh
‘tall person’		‘fresh njama njama’	

derived adjectives, e.g. from Bafut

n1b0'0	nili
n1-b0'0	ni-lii
5-pumpkin	5-sweet
‘sweet pumpkin’	

HOW SHUPAMEM DIFFERS FROM RELATED LANGUAGES?

However, Shupamem differs in at least 2 aspects:

it allows flexibility of certain adjectives i.e. prenominal and postnominal position

tonal changes observed on modified nouns are not dependent on a noun class but rather on the underlying tonal pattern associated with the noun

GROUPS OF ADJECTIVES IN SHUPAMEM

Shupamem also distinguishes between true adjectives that have fixed position either prenominal or postnominal, and derived adjectives.

true prenominal

mgbam ‘big’, kataP ‘complex’, kum ‘old’

true postnominal

mfE ‘new’, nsa ‘tall’, mb0 ‘raw’

noun-like postnominal

asara ‘evil’, par@ ‘crazy’, nZam ‘dark’

derived

k1pkEt ‘broken’, pokEt ‘good’, v1@kEt ‘rotten’

TRUE PRENOMINAL

SRs: Adj/N	kjEt ‘spear’	nZOP ‘flower’
samba: ‘x.large’	samba: kj"Et	samba: nZOP
ntam ‘long’	ntam kj"Et	ntam nZOP

Table 1: Prenominal adjectives + monosyllabic nouns

SRs: Adj/N	mapam ‘coat’	lapaP ‘shoe’	m@mvi ‘goat’	buSi ‘cat’
samba:	samba: mapam	samba: l"apaP	samba: m@mvi	samba: b"uSi
ntam	ntam mapam	ntam l"apaP	ntam m@mvi	ntam b"uSi

Table 2: Prenominal adjectives + disyllabic nouns

TRUE PRENOMINAL

SRs: Adj/N	kjEt ‘spear’	nZOP ‘flower’
samba: ‘x.large’	samba: kj”Et	samba: nZOP
ntam ‘long’	ntam kj”Et	ntam nZOP

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ntam	ntam mapam	ntam l”apaP	ntam m@mvi	ntam b”uSi

Table 2: Prenominal adjectives + disyllabic nouns

H ”H

POSTNOMINAL ADJECTIVES

SRs: Adj/N	kjEt 'spear'	nZOP 'flower'
si 'black'	kjEt si	nZOP si
Ngur1 'big'	kjEt si	nZOP si
asara 'evil'	kjEt asara	nZOP asara
pa:r1 'crazy'	kjEt pa:r1	nZOP pa:r1

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pure ADJ: noun-like ADJ:
H L H HL
 L LH

POSTNOMINAL ADJECTIVES

SRs: Adj/N	mapam	lapaP	m@mv i	buSi
si Ngr1	mapam si mapam Ngr1	lapaP si lapaP Ngr1	m@mivsi m@mivNgr1	buS si buSNgr1
asara pa:r 1	mapamasara mapam pa:r1	lapaPasara lapaP pa:r1	m@mivasara m@mivpa:r1	buSasara buSpa:r1

Table 4: Disyllabic nouns + postnominal adjectives

POSTNOMINAL ADJECTIVES

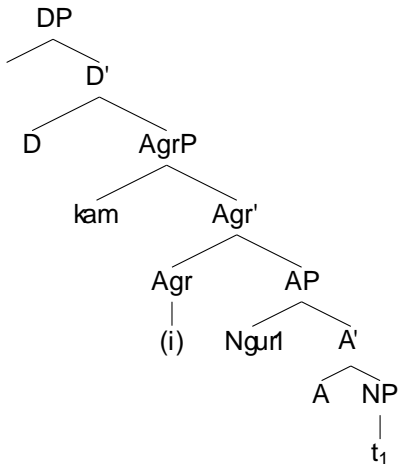
SRs: Adj/N	mapam	lapaP	m@mv i	buSi
si Ngr1	mapam si mapam Ngr1	lapaP si lapaP Ngr1	m@mivsi m@mivNgr1	buS si buSNgr1
asara pa:r 1	mapamasara mapam pa:r1	lapaPasara lapaP pa:r1	m@mivasara m@mivpa:r1	buSasara buSpa:r1

Table 4: Disyllabic nouns + postnominal adjectives

H.H H.H
L.L L.LH
L.H L.L
H.L H.H

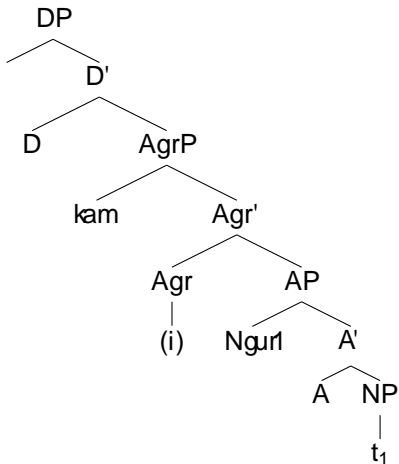
POSTNOMINAL TRUE: MOVEMENT

kam `crab' + Ngu1 `big'



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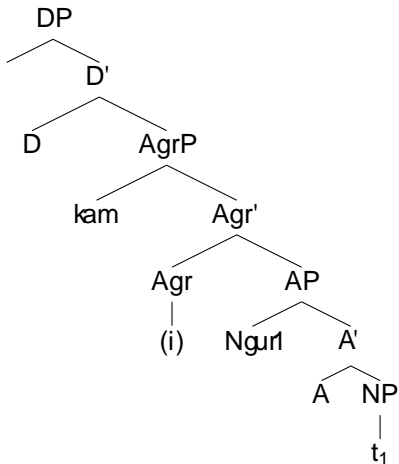
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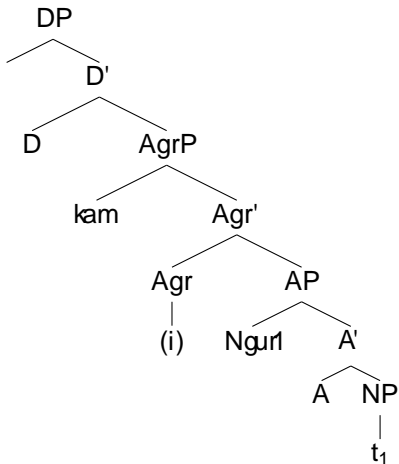
kam `crab' + Ngur1 `big'



3 kam Ngur 1 `big crab'
3 kam i Ngur1 `the big crab'

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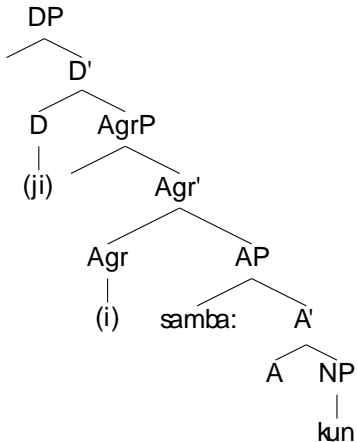
kam `crab' + Ngu1 `big'



- 3 kam Ngu1 1`big crab'
- 3 kam i Ngu1 `the big crab'
- 7 (i) Ngu1 kam

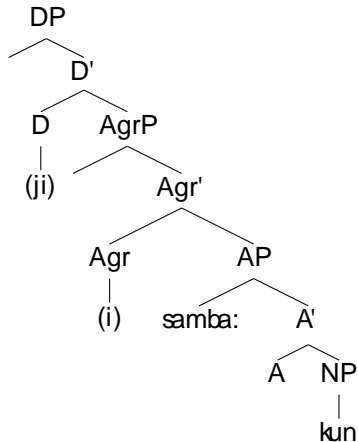
PRENOMINAL TRUE: NO MOVEMENT

kun `bed' + samba: `x. large'



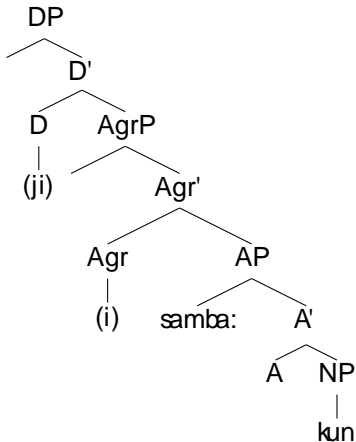
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kun `bed' + samba: `x. large'

3 samba: k'un `x.large
bed'

PRENOMINAL TRUE: NO MOVEMENT

kun `bed' + samba: `x. large'

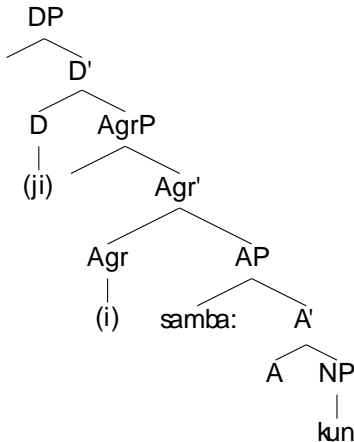


3 samba: k'un `x.large
bed'

3 ji samba: k'un `this
x.large bed'

PRENOMINAL TRUE: NO MOVEMENT

kun `bed' + samba: `x. large'



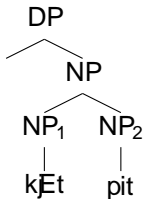
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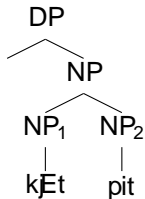
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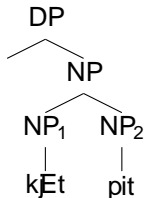
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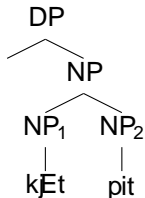


3 kɛt pit `war spear'

7 kɛt pit `war spear'

COMPOUNDS AND MORE

kʃEt `spear' +pit `war'



3 kʃEt p it `war spear'

7 kʃEt pit `war spear'

Y similar tonal behavior exhibit reduplicated noun (Markowska, 2020)

L

kàm `game'
kám `crab'

kám kàm `games'
kám kám `crabs'

MORE CONSTRUCTIONS TO EXPLORE

- Y kun `bed' + ən 1`light'
- L kun ən 1`day bed'
- L kun r`an 1`bed for the light'

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Y kun `bed' + ən 1 `light'

L kun ən 1 `day bed'

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Y kun `bed' + nZam `dark'

L kun nZam `night bed'

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└ kun nZam `bed for the dark'

Y kʃEt `spear' + asəə `evil'

└ kʃEtasəə `evil arrow'

└ kʃEtasəə `evil's arrow'

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Y phonology cannot account for such cases

SUMMARY

Y tonal changes on nouns modified by adjectives are dependent on:

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2. type of adjective
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Y it is evident that purely phonological analysis of those phenomena is impossible

Y Shupamem tones play crucial role in the grammar of the language

Thank you!

Contact:

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ncharelaziz@gmail.com

-kEt ADJECTIVES: PRENOMINAL

SRs: Adj/N	kEt `spear'	nZOP` ower'
poEt `good'	poEt kEt	poEt nZOP
k1pEt `broken'	k1pEt kEt	k1pEt nZOP

SRs: Adj/N	mapam `coat'	lapaP `shoe'	m@mv i `goat'	buSi `cat'
poEt	poEt mapam	poEt lapaP	poEt m@miv	poEt buSi
k1pEt	k1pEt mapam	k1pEt lapaP	k1pEt m@miv	k1pEt buSi

-kEt ADJECTIVES: PRENOMINAL

SRs: Adj/N	kEt `spear'	nZOP `ower'
ɸkEt `good'	ɸkEt kEt	ɸkEt nZOP
k1pEt `broken'	k1pEt kEt	k1pEt nZOP

SRs: Adj/N	mapam `coat'	lapaP `shoe'	m@mv i `goat'	buSi `cat'
ɸkEt	ɸkEt mapam	ɸkEt lapaP	ɸkEt m@miv	ɸkEt buSi
k1pEt	k1pEt mapam	k1pEt lapaP	k1pEt m@miv	k1pEt buSi

Changes:

Y H L

Y H.H L.L

Y H.L L.L

Y no downstep rule

Y tonal change on the adjective

-kEt ADJECTIVES: POSTNOMINAL

SRs: Adj/N	kEt `spear'	nZOP `ower'
mbokEt `good'	kjEt mbokEt	nZOP mbokEt
Nk1pEt `broken'	kjEt Nk1pEt	nZOP Nk1pEt

SRs: Adj/N	mapam `coat'	lapaP `shoe'	m@mv i `goat'	buSi `cat'
mbokEt	mapam mbokEt	lapaP mbokEt	m@mivmbokEt	buS mbokEt
Nk1pEt	mapam Nk1pEt	lapaP Nk1pEt	m@mivNk1pEt	buSNk1pEt

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Changes:

Y H L (expected)

Y L.H L.L (expected)

Y L L is the ADJ begins with L tone

Y L LH is the ADJ begins with H tone

Y H.L H.L is the ADJ begins with L tone

Y H.L H.H is the ADJ begins with H tone

SUMMARY OF TONAL CHANGES: PRENOMINAL

UR: N / Adj	kum `old'	k1pkEt `broken'	pkEt `good'
lam `crab'	kum k"am	k1pkEt kam	pkEt kam
pum `egg'	kum pum	k1pkEt pum	pkEt pum
mapam `coat'	kum mapam	k1pkEt mapam	pkEt mapam
lapaP `shoe'	kum l"apaP	k1pkEt lapaP	pkEt lapaP
m@mi `goat'	kum m@mi	k1pkEt m@ni	pkEt m@mi
wumpa `thought'	kum w"upma	k1pkEt wumpa	pkEt wupma

H	"H	H	L	H	L
H.H	"H.H	H.H	L.L	H.H	L.L
H.L	"H.L	H.L	L.L	H.L	L.L

SUMMARY OF TONAL CHANGES: POSTNOMINAL

UR: N / Adj	mE `new'	k1pkEt 'broken'	pkEt `good'
kam `crab'	ka m mE	ka m NK1pkEt	ka m mbokEt
pum `egg'	pu m mE	pu m NK1pkEt	pu m mbokEt
mapam `coat'	ma p am mE	ma p am NK1pkEt	ma p am mbokEt
lapaP `shoe'	la p aP mE	la p aP NK1pkEt	la p aP mbokEt
m@mi `goat'	m@mi v mE	m@mi v NK1pkEt	m@mi v mbokEt
wumpa `thought'	wu p a mE	wu p a NK1pkEt	wu p a mbokEt

L LH
H.L H.H

L LH
H.L H.H

L L
H.L H.L

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