

YASUKU MARITIME VOCABULARY

[DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]

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1. Introduction

The Yasuku [Yàsúkú] language is a dialect within the Bakoko cluster (Bantu A40) spoken scattered communities in Littoral Province, south of Douala, Wouri Division, south of Dibombari, Moungo Division, around Nkondjok, Nkam Division, southwest of Edea, Sanaga-Maritime Division and northwest area of Ocean Division, South Province (Lewis 2009). Most Bakoko lects are spoken inland and their speakers have no knowledge of the sea. The main villages of the Yasuku were given as Yàwàndà, Ñdókóhì, Yálpíndà, Ábèè, Ndógrmbiàn, Sómè, Óngándè, Ékòt, Mpómbò, Èlòkám, Óngè, Dèhánè, Jàsúkúlóm and Ìkòhámèén.

The other dialects of Bakoko include Yákálák, Àdiyè, Bisoo, Mbang, Yabyang and Yapoma. In terms of pre-existing research, work on Bakoko is extremely limited. Edika (1990) studied the sound system of Yabyang and Kenmongne (2000) researched the lexical phonology of Yakalak. Bitjaa and Ndokobai (2004) sociolinguistic profile of Bakoko lects and suggested that Yakalak be used to develop an orthography. Njeck & Anderson (2009) have published a Bakoko Orthography Guide based on Yakalak. Nonetheless, no detailed dialect study has yet been undertaken, and the current material is transcribed in an IPA-like phonetic transcription. Although languages like this are usually described as having two level tones, Yasuku appears to have a phonetic mid-tone, marked here by a macron over the vowel.

Elicitation of maritime terminology was conducted at xx during February 2010. We are grateful to our informants, Epudji Alex, Biyang Bertrand and Ekemba François for taking time to assist us with fish names.

There are three main field guides with illustrations useful to identify fish and other aquatic species for the coast of Cameroun and regions south. The most comprehensive and authoritative printed source is Schneider (1990), which covers the commercial species of West Africa. Crustaceans and reptiles are included, but not sea mammals, which however, are best identified from another FAO publication (Jefferson et al. 1993). Information from FAO datasheets has now been incorporated into the online resource, Fishbase (<http://www.fishbase.org>), which allows existing biological data to be analysed in a variety of ways. According to the most recent version accessed, some 545 marine species are recorded for Cameroun. Many of these are small, rare, or only recorded in deepwater, and so unfamiliar to local fishermen. Nonetheless, with enlarged colour photos it might well be possible for oceangoing fishermen to identify further species. Seret & Opic (1997) covers only fish but includes a wide variety of pelagic species. It has larger-scale paintings of fish, some in colour, others regrettably in greyscale reproduction, which are harder to recognise and focuses on commercial and sport fish, excluding many smaller species. A valuable publication restricted to Cameroun is Vivien (1991) which represents a reliable source of identifications, and includes many small fish as well as estuarine and river species. Colour photographs of some species are included, but many are only shown in line-drawings. Coverage is patchy with some significant marine species omitted without comment.

2. Yasuku fish names

Table 1 gives the names of all the seafish identified for Yasuku. One of the surprising features is the number of names for different types of shark; many languages have a single generic term.

Table 1. Yasuku sea fish names

Page	sg.	pl.	English	French	Latin	Comments		
S21/1	̀̀nd`om`ı́	ḕt`u`n	̀̀nd`om`ı́	b`ıt`u`n`b`ē	bullshark	requin taureau	<i>Eugomphodus taurus</i>	
	m`ı́p`ḕk	m`ı́p`ḕk						
S21/2	̀̀nd`om`ı́	n`t`a`n`d`ā	̀̀nd`om`ı́		thresher shark	renard du mer	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>	
	m`ı́p`ḕk	n`j`ı́m`ı́t`a`n`d`ā						
		m`ı́p`ḕk						
S25	̀̀nd`om`ı́	--			catshark	petite roussette	<i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>	‘shark with long ears’
	m`ı́t`a`n`d`ā	m`ı́’`ó						
S27/1	̀̀nd`om`ı́	ḕt`h`u`n			barbeled hondshark	emissole	<i>Leptocharias smithii</i>	‘shark with short mouth’
	ápnù							
S27/2	̀̀nd`om`ı́	n`t`a			smoothhound	emissole lisse	<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>	‘shark with long mouth’
	n`d`á	ápnù						
S29	̀̀nd`om`ı́	è`v`ı́v`ı́n`é	b`ı́v`ı́v`ı́n`é	b`ı́n`d`om`ı́	tiger shark	requin tigre	<i>Galeocerdo cuvieri</i>	‘black shark’
S31	è`p`ú`p`ú`w`ê				milk shark	requin à museau	<i>Rhizoprionodon acutus</i>	‘white shark’, tone change in ‘shark’
	̀̀nd`om`ı́					pointu		
S41	̀̀nd`om`ı́	n`s`ô`ŋ						‘shark with pointed mouth’
	ápnù							
S45	è`v`ı́v`ı́n`é				smoothback angelshark	ange de mer ocellé	<i>Squatina oculata</i>	‘black’
	è`t`ú`t`ú`m`ā							
	k`ô`m`b`ó`ó	--						
S63	k`ô`m`b`ó`ó							‘broad k`ô`m`b`ó`ó’
	m`é`p`á`á							
S51	è`t`ú`t`ú`m`ā	b`ı́-			guitarfish	raie-guitare	<i>Rhinobatos spp.</i>	
S57-61	è`t`ú`t`ú`m`ā							
181	è`t`ú`t`ú`m`ā							‘with teeth’
	m`ı́s`ô`ŋ							
S 65/7	d`ù`b`à	m`ū`b`à			ray generic	pastenaque	<i>Dasyatis spp.</i>	
S83	m`ó`n`d`ē	--			Senegal ladyfish	guinée du Sénégal	<i>Elops senegalensis</i>	
S86/91	ŋ`g`ò`ò				moray	murène á oreille	<i>Muraena melanotis</i>	ŋ`g`o`o of sea
	t`ú`w`é					noire		
S95-99	è`-l`ó`l`ó	b`ı́-			sardine	sardine	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	and other sardinellas. also <i>s`a`r`d`ı́n` è`t`ı́w`é</i>

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Page	sg.	pl.	English	French	Latin	Comments
S101	èpàgà	bìpàyà	bonga shad	ethmalose	<i>Ethmalosa fimbriata</i>	
S103	ǰòò	míyòò	razorfish	rasoir	<i>Ilisha africana</i>	
107	kèndā		sea catfish	mâchoiron	<i>Arius heudeloti</i>	
129	èṅṅè kòṅgè		soldierfish	poisson-soldat	<i>Adioryx hastatus</i>	
143	kāṅgá púpúwé		rockfish	rascasse	<i>Helicolenus dactylopterus</i>	
161	èṅṅè kāṅgà		comb grouper	badèche, méro royale	<i>Mycteroperca rubra</i>	
163	vè vè kāṅgà		blue-spotted seabass	méro à points bleus	<i>Cephalopholis taeniops</i>	‘red kanga’
169	òpèlè víkāṅgà		grouper	méro commun	<i>Epinephelus guaza</i>	
175	kòṅgè zòṅ		dara	croco à gros yeux	<i>Parakuhlia macrophthalmus</i>	
195/197/199	ṅtòṅdò	mì-	crevally jack, kingfish	grande carangue	<i>Caranx hippos</i>	
207	ṅgópí mìtòṅ	ṅgópí mìtòṅ	terai pompano	pompaneau	<i>Trachinotus terai</i>	‘with spots’ tone change plural
209	ṅgópí étù áṅù		galloon pompano	pompaneau chevron	<i>Trachinotus maxillosus</i>	‘with short mouth’
213	ṅtòmbé ábòmlàgè		moonfish	Mussolini	<i>Selene dorsalis</i>	‘ntombe butter head’
217	èkòṅgó	bì-	dolphinfish	coryphène-dauphin	<i>Coryphaena equiselis</i>	
219	ṅkóbé		snapper	vivaneau	<i>Lutjanus fulgens</i>	
229	ṅkóbé mìtòṅ		sompat grunt	grondeur sompat	<i>Pomadasyss jubelini</i>	‘with spots’
277	lìvyó lésòṅ		cassava croaker	otolithe	<i>Pseudotolithus brachygnathus</i>	‘l. with teeth’
275	èṅṅè lìvyó				<i>Pseudotolithus senegalensis</i>	
279	ṅéndí míjèè		law croaker	bossu	<i>Pseudotolithus elongatus</i>	
289	àvyòṅ		moony	poisson-chandelle	<i>Psettias sebae</i>	< French <i>avion</i> ‘plane’
293	disk		sicklefish, disco fish	disque, drepane africain	<i>Drepane africana</i>	< French <i>disque</i>
S309/11	m̀bògí	m̀bòyí	mullet	mulet à grandes nageoires	<i>Liza falcipinnis</i>	/g/ and /ɣ/ variation
319	ṅsòlò ā tūwē		barracuda	petit barracuda à bande dorée	<i>Sphyraena guachancho</i> , <i>S. afra</i>	‘ <i>Hepsetus odoe</i> of the sea’
323	sé ótùn áméyè		lesser threadfin	capitaine-plexiglas	<i>Galeoïdes decadactylus</i>	‘courte barbe’

Table 2. Yasuku freshwater fish names

page	sg.	pl.	English	French	Latin	Comments
V8/9	m̀bón					
V6	̀̀kùl bóngó					
V29	Kàmèrùn					
V31	m̀bēm				<i>Papyrocranus afer</i>	
V39	tòlòkò					mouse fish
V52	̀̀dèbè					
V65	̀̀sóbó					
V84	̀̀lélègà					
V87	sémbè					
V95	̀̀sòlò				<i>Hepsetus odoe</i>	
V97	̀̀nàngát					
V107	m̀bándó					
V108	m̀bà ^h					
V122	̀̀nàngát m̀sòṅ					
V140	̀̀nàngát é̀vò					
V163	é̀vò ò̀gók					
V180	̀̀zôn					
V247	m̀bòṅ					
V267	ò̀kókòṅ	à-				‘machoirón’
V278	̀̀nàrà					
V305	ò̀gò					
V316	̀̀júnà				<i>Malapterurus electricus</i>	‘poisson courant’
V356	lilè					
V368ff	̀̀m̀bòṅgò					
V460	é̀ondó					
V457/8	ǹbòndò					
V452	è̀pòṅgò è̀kún					pique les pieds

Table 3. Yasuku maritime fauna

page	sg.	pl.	English	French	Comments
	ndzòndzi	--	whale		
	yòhí ^h	byòhí ^h	dolphin		
	í-yê	bí-	seal		
	̀̀dzímbó		otter		
	dzàgà		sea cow		
	̀̀zè kàbùmà		jellyfish		‘stinging panther’
	m̀bòndzi è̀tūwē		coral		
V171	ǹàgà túwé	mi-			
	m̀káyàlà mi tūwē		beach crab		
	bikékàli		clam		

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sg.	pl.	English	French	Comments
ēsēè		Feb-Apr		cultivating
òlùndè		May-Nov		little fish

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