

## **“Looking for micro-areal features within the Macro-Sudan Belt”**

The Macro-Sudan Belt in northern sub-Saharan Africa has been defined as a linguistic area based on a range of features whose diffusion must have been mediated by large-scale contact (Güldemann 2008). Rather than adding more features to the general list of those which have already been identified as widespread throughout the entire area, an attempt is made to zoom in on one of the sub-areas, i.e the Bantu borderland in the Grassfields region. In concrete terms, the following features will be discussed under the perspective of areal diffusion: verbal serialisation, numeral classifiers and the first person dual as constituting a pronominal system of the minimal vs. augmented type (Cysouw 2003). While numeral classifiers and the first person dual pronoun seem to be confined to specific sub-areas within the Macro-Sudan Belt, verbal serialisation has a much wider distribution (Dimmendaal 2001). However, Grassfields Bantu evidence suggests that it has very limited value as a feature defining a linguistic area, unless refined by more specific functional criteria.