

## **Don't waste words – some aspects of the Tima lexicon**

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*The Tima lexicon may not contain many nominal roots compared to some other languages. This is due, not to the fact that the Tima people living in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan don't like to talk to each other, but rather to frequent cases of polysemy. Many lexemes have more than one meaning, and usually it is clear which meaning is the more basic or original one. Take, for example, the word for 'ear', which at the same time serves to denote a cooking-spoon: a case of polysemy (involving metaphorical extension), which becomes clear when taking into account the shape of the spoon. That the Tima lexicon is nevertheless rich can be attributed to the people's love to play with words, or – going to the micro-level – to play around with the sounds within words. In this paper, special attention will be given to the most eye- (and ear-) catching phenomena concerning lexical semantics the Tima team came across since the beginning of their studies of this Niger-Congo language.*