

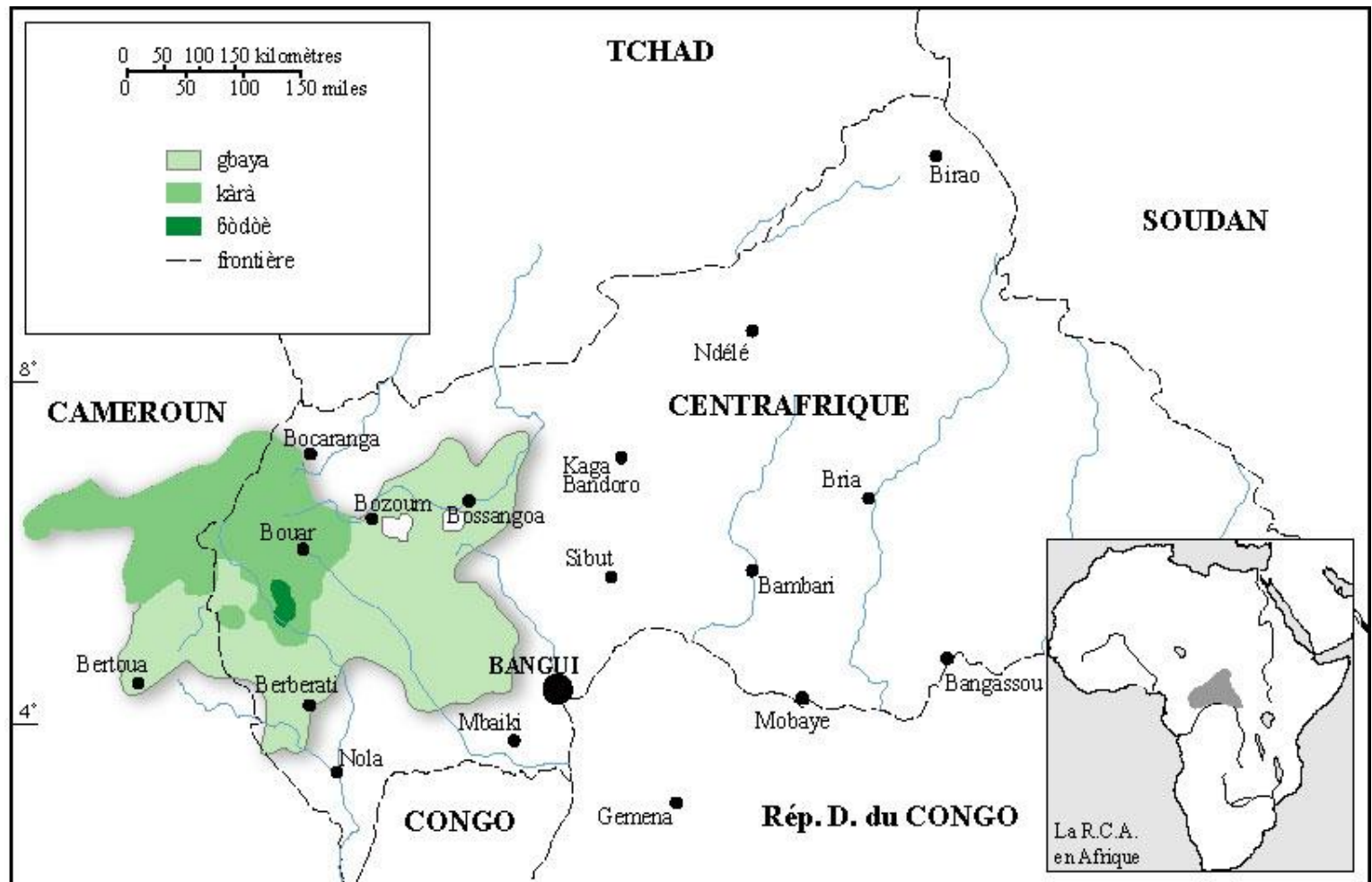


# Some characteristics of gbaya ideophones

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# Localisation of gbaya languages



Gbáyá bòdòè, an Ubanguian language (Niger-Congo family) spoken in the northwest part of the Central African Republic

# Ideophones: a subcategory of adjectives

- An open class that constitutes the numerically most important subgroup of adjectives (2040 items, that represent 30% of the lexicon).
- Original terms that cannot be related to other terms in the language.
- They use the existing phonological potential by giving it a different distribution and have many reduplicated forms.
- They can express all semantic domains, and are used in all types of speech.
- On the syntactic level, they behave in the same way as two other subcategories of Adjectives.
- They constitute a part-of-speech class that I call 'adjective-adverbs' (AA).

# Syntactic uses of the various subcategories of Adjectives

Specificities ↓	Subcatégories of Adjectives				
	<b>A</b> (21)	<b>VA</b> (167)	<b>AA</b> (2040)	<b>RA</b> (89)	<b>&lt; N</b> (21)
<i>Semantism of quality</i>	primary state	resultative	all qualities	relational	prototype
Expressive modulations			x		
<i>Nominalization</i> (-à)	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Attributive use</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Placed before Noun	x	x	x [+ TR]	x	x
Absolute superlative		x			
Modified by AUG / DIM		x			
Placed post Noun	x [nè X.MNLZ]		x		
<i>Adverbial use</i>	x [nè X.MNLZ]		x		
<i>Predicative uses</i>					
Post copula verb ?o	x [nè X.MNLZ]		x		
In junctapositive predication A/B	x [nè X.MNLZ]		x / x [nè X.MNLZ]		
Holophrastic use			x [LH.AA]		

Abbreviations:

A adjective, VA Verbal adjective, AA Adjective-adverb, RA relational adjective, N noun, AUG augmentative, DIM diminutive, TR Tonal raising, NMLZ nominalisation

# The tonal structure of AAs

- The lexical tonal pattern of AA is either high or low, it remains unchanged in most uses. There are three cases of syntactic regular changes.
- In attributive use, when placed before the noun, the tonal pattern is raised (RT). The high-scheme AAs are not modified, the low-scheme AAs are modified as follows: (b̀̀r̀̀n̄ and b̀̀m-b̀̀m)

1. b̀̀r̀̀n̄	z̀̀m̄é	2. b̀̀m-b̀̀m̄	t̀̀m̄é
long and and pointed:RT	head:MT:2SG	swollen on small piece:RT	body:MT:2SG
<i>Egg-shaped head</i>		<i>Swollen and small body</i>	

- A HL scheme on AAs in adverbial use as a specific mark of topicalization.
- A LH scheme can characterize the holophrastic use of any AA, whatever its lexical tonal pattern

# Overview on AAs syntactic uses

- Occurrences of AAs in a reference corpus of spontaneous speech of 4.5 hours.

Syntactic uses :	Nbr	%	Constructions	% in each use	
Attributive use	<b>20</b>	7,2%			
			Placed before Noun (Dt Dé)	9	45%
			Placed post Noun (Dé Dt)	11	55%
Adverbial use	<b>219</b>	79,1%			
			At the beginning of a clause	58	26,5%
			At the end of a clause, post verbal group	161	73,5%
Predicative use	<b>38</b>	13,7%			
			Post copula verb ?o	27	71%
			In juxtapositive predication A/B	3	7,8%
			Holophrastic use	8	21,2%
Total	<b>277</b>	100%			

- I will present the holophrastic use which is a specificity of AAs

# Holophrastic use of AAs

- The ability of AAs to function as complete, autonomous utterances. A LH scheme characterizes this use.

a) AA in a subordinated clause (*gbèngém* « resonating loudly »)

ʔà né kàá nò kà gbèngém

3sg INAC:go REP-ADD walk so that LH:resonating loudly

*She walks as usual, so that it resonates loudly. (ankle bells)*

b) Clause with juxtapositive predication (*bìt* « in short pieces »)

zěr sàdî hẹ̀ bìt

ear:MT animal PROX LH:in short pieces

*The ears of animals make a bunch of short pieces*

I will discuss the case of AA referring to sound, and another possibility for interpreting the LH tonal scheme > onomatopoeia which never have a homophrastic use.

# Semantic domains of AAs

- On the basis of the 2235 AAs collected (cf. Roulon-Doko, 2008), I was able to distinguish that they supported very varied semantic domains.

Semantic domains	Nbr.	Semantic domains	Nbr.	Semantic d.	Nbr.
movement	383	quantity	93	fill_in	24
size-shape	352	drink-eat	88	cooking	22
position-attitude	198	color	86	wet-dry	19
occupation_of_space	178	feeling-sensation_speech	82	how_to_tie	18
sound	178	speech	46	hot-cold	18
fall-break-flow	136	pain	46	swelling	17
aspect	125	opening	39	hit	17
consistency	109	cleanliness-dirt	30	smell	15
		light	29		

Group A 15% - 17%

Group B 5% - 8%

Group C 1% - 5%

Group D 0,5% - 0,8 %



# Organization of the meanings

- AAs support certain types of meanings on a regular basis, such as:
  - 1) the quantitative degree such as very, too, a little, etc.,
  - 2) a relationship to a specific medium (men, round objet, etc.),
  - 3) an association of meanings, often two, sometimes more than two.
- For example, « big » can be expressed by an A "big, important" *gbà* - an essential value -, by an VA "big, big" *gásá* - a value defined at the base as expressing the result of a process (< *gasi* "to grow") -, and five AAs which take into account various values built from 'big'.

AA	Meaning	Specificity
<b>rùkpùtù-rùkpùtù</b>	too big, too tall	degree
<b>tàlàngàzàṅ</b>	big for a child of 10-12 years old	specific medium
<b>hèr-ngèzèṅ</b>	big and tall	2 values
<b>kpéngém</b>	not too big and straight	2 values
<b>zòlòbòtò</b>	big and heavy	2 values

## AAs for 'cold'

AA	Sens	Spécification
<b>bún-bún</b>	cold	neutral
<b>yìngbìngbì</b>	very cold [sp. house ]	specific medium
<b>pàsòp</b>	refreshing	degree
<b>pèè</b>	cool	degree
<b>dòmì</b>	quite cool, chilled	degree
<b>ngìt-ngìt</b>	very cold	degree

## AAs for 'hot'

AA	Sens	Spécification
<b>kpóróró</b>	hot	neutral
<b>fádán</b>	warm	degree
<b>gìwìṅ-gìwìṅ</b>	warming up	degree
<b>fátátá</b>	well heated	degree
<b>kpóyóyó</b>	very hot	degree
<b>gèzè-gèzè</b>	overheated	degree
<b>hìò-hìò</b>	burning, feverish	degree
<b>gòsì-gòsì</b>	warm [sp. house]	specific medium
<b>wòsì-wòsì</b>	warm and cozy [sp. house]	specific medium
<b>kpóngóngó</b>	very feverish [sp. corps]	specific medium

- AAs for « soft »

TACTILE CONTACT		TASTE CONTACT	
<b>soft without spring</b>		<b>specific for pastes (pumpkin, sesame...)</b>	
<b>ɓ̀̀l-ɓ̀̀l</b>	soft	<b>mb̀̀l̀̀e-mb̀̀l̀̀e</b>	in soft mass
<b>mb̀̀r-mb̀̀r</b>	uniformly soft	<b>t̀̀l̀̀i-t̀̀l̀̀i</b>	ramolli [casava dough]
<b>ỳ̀k̀̀-ỳ̀k̀̀</b>	softened	<b>ɓ̀̀t̀̀t̀̀k̀̀ỳ̀</b>	softened [oleaginous paste]
<b>ỳ̀k̀̀t̀̀</b>	dampened	<b>h̀̀ẁ̀è̀</b>	too soft
<b>t̀̀f̀̀è̀</b>	softened by cooking	<b>ỳ̀l̀̀p-ỳ̀l̀̀p</b>	smooth and flowing
<b>ɓ̀̀l̀̀è̀</b>	soft and white	<b>specific for meat and tubers</b>	
<b>soft with spring</b>		<b>m̀̀d̀̀e-m̀̀d̀̀e</b>	tender
<b>f̀̀k̀̀m</b>	elastic	<b>m̀̀d̀̀è̀k̀̀</b>	melt-in-the-mouth
<b>gb̀̀l̀̀</b>	flange	<b>ỳ̀r-ỳ̀r</b>	deliquescent by cooking
<b>doughy</b>		<b>ʔ̀̀t̀̀-ʔ̀̀t̀̀</b>	too soft
<b>h̀̀d̀̀e-h̀̀d̀̀e</b>	in paste	<b>f̀̀f̀̀p ; f̀̀p-f̀̀p</b>	spongy
<b>b̀̀t̀̀e-b̀̀t̀̀e</b>	in liquid paste	<b>specific for leaf-vegetables</b>	
<b>d̀̀kp̀̀e-d̀̀kp̀̀e</b>	in a muddy mass	<b>mb̀̀r-g̀̀d̀̀ɔ</b>	smooth
<b>h̀̀l̀̀i</b>	soft as shit	<b>h̀̀r-g̀̀d̀̀ɔ</b>	very creamy
		<b>r̀̀k̀̀e-r̀̀k̀̀e</b>	too creamy

# Conclusion

- Thus, AAs carry semantic values that are always related to a specific notional framework in which the elements considered relevant are defined. This is difficult to translate into a single term in the target language and produces in translation various meanings, each of which has one or more specificities whose unity is difficult to identify. Thus, for example, the expression of degree, which is often rendered by morphological procedures, is here largely lexicalised, producing for each degree a term of its own without relation to any other term in the language. The same is true of the multiplicity of AAs to express the same value, but in different media, which reveals the speakers' conceptualisation of the world.
- The holophrastic use of AAs confirms that they have a well-defined meaning, sufficient to reconstruct the situation of which they express a specific characterisation.
- To conclude, AAs which are the largest group of gbara adjectives, offer a great lexical variety representative of all culturally conceptualised semantic domains.

# Some referencies

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