



HAL
open science

Is Sinyar an SBB language?

Pascal Boyeldieu

► **To cite this version:**

Pascal Boyeldieu. Is Sinyar an SBB language?. 14th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium, University of Vienna, May 2019, Vienne, Austria. halshs-04579988

HAL Id: halshs-04579988

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04579988v1>

Submitted on 18 May 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Is Sinyar an SBB language?

Pascal BOYELDIEU
CNRS (Llacan, UMR 8135), France
pascal.boyeldieu@cnrs.fr

“It is the contention of this writer that although many superficial bonds with the larger group [i.e. Sara-Bongo-Bagirmi] exist on the level of vocabulary, differences of phonology, grammar, and also vocabulary are very impressive.”

(Doornbos, *The Language of the Sinyar*, p. 1)

Introduction

Sinyar (*tààr* ¹*fàmjà* {mouth=language/Sinyar}) is an underdocumented language spoken by some 20.000 speakers living in Western Darfur and extending on the Chadian side of the border with Sudan (see Map).

Up to now Sinyar has been considered a member of the SBB (Sara-Bongo-Bagirmi) branch of Central Sudanic languages (Tucker & Bryan 1956; Haaland 1978; Doornbos & Bender 1983, Bender 1992). However Doornbos ([1980?]: 1) himself questioned this classification as he wrote the first grammatical sketch of the language some forty years ago (see epigraph above).

Further research recently devoted to Sinyar confirms Doornbos' view: although Sinyar shares many lexical and morphosyntactic features with the neighbouring SBB languages, it also differs of them on many other points so that it looks, to some extent, as a 'mixed' language, the 'non-SBB' component of which, however, has not been identified until now.¹

The aim of this paper is to review different Sinyar features that are respectively similar to and distinct from features characteristic of the SBB languages. By doing so I want to

- define the two sources of Sinyar and clarify its nature of 'mixed' language;
- try to identify the SBB languages Sinyar is the closest to;
- tentatively answer the tricky question of its genesis, i.e. was Sinyar originally an SBB language that underwent a strong foreign influence or, rather, was Sinyar an exogenous language that integrated numerous features of certain SBB languages he got a significant contact with? In other words are there clues suggesting that the 'non-SBB' part of Sinyar represents an adstrate or a substrate?

1. Sinyar features partly shared with SBB languages

Lexicon and lexicostatistics

Lexicon specific to Sinyar (Table 1)


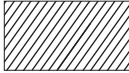


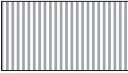

Lexicostatistics: lexical distances of Sinyar with Central Sudanic (Table 2-3) and SBB (Tables 4-5)

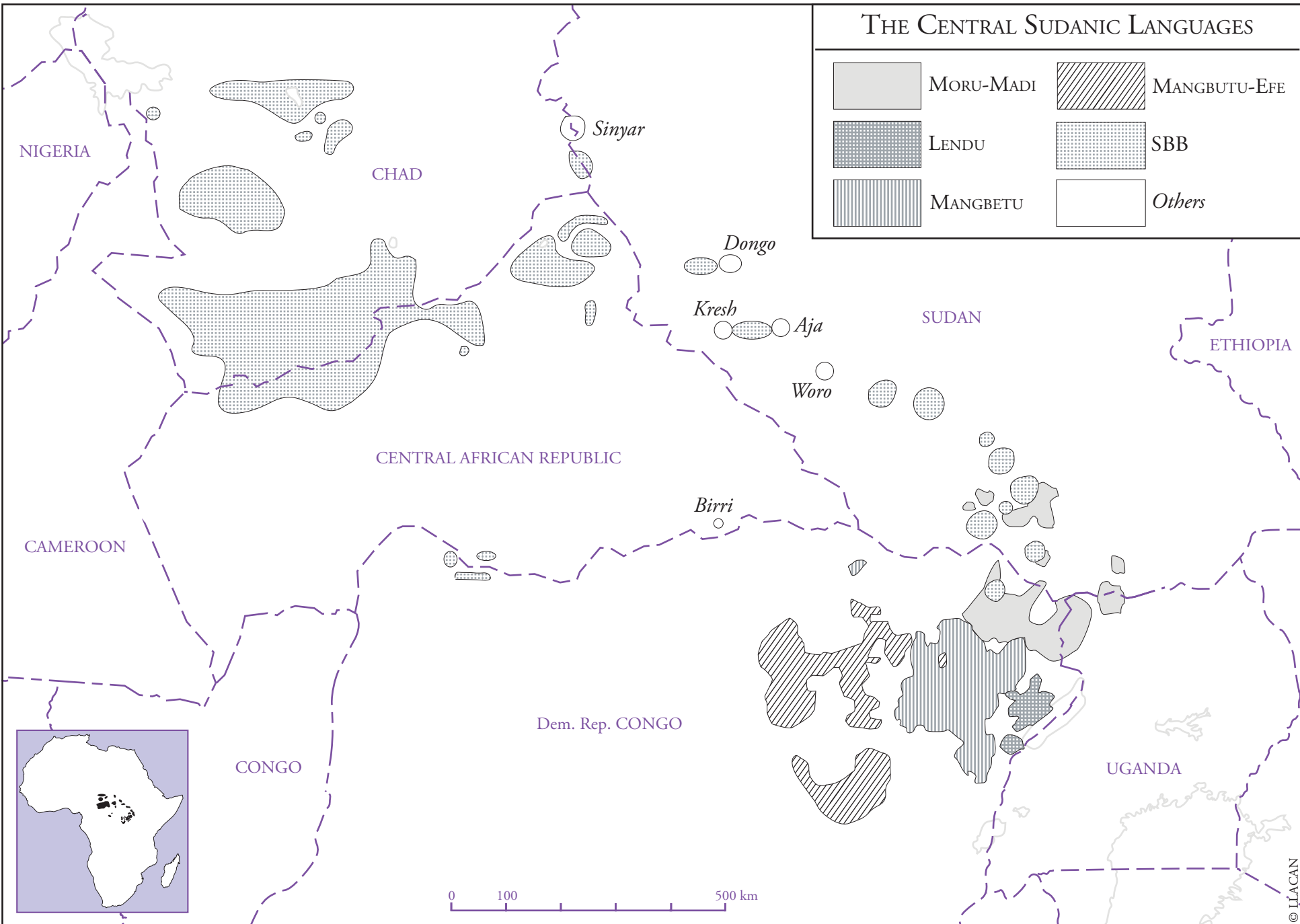
Personal pronouns

Independent vs associative ('possessive') (Table 6-7)

¹ More recent fieldwork has been undertaken by myself in Khartoum since 2009. I hereby express my gratitude to my different assistants, translators from Arabic or Sinyar speakers, Messrs Zakaria Abdulkarim, Sheekhedin Osman, Mahammat Suleyman Baabikir, Hassan Sale, and, above all, Mr Bakheet Abdulkarim.

THE CENTRAL SUDANIC LANGUAGES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|--------------|
|  | MORU-MADI |  | MANGBUTU-EFE |
|  | LENDU |  | SBB |
|  | MANGBETU |  | Others |



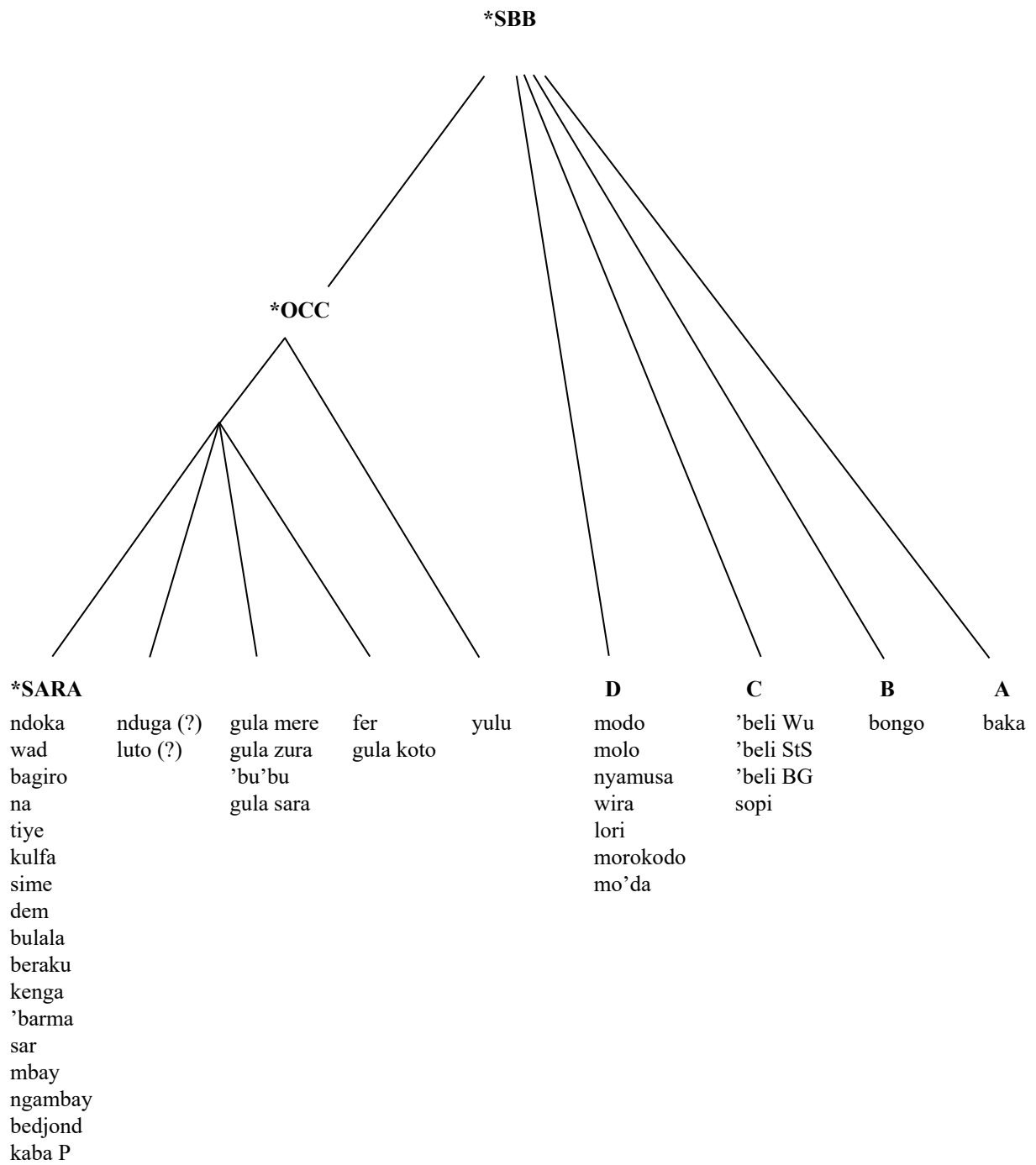
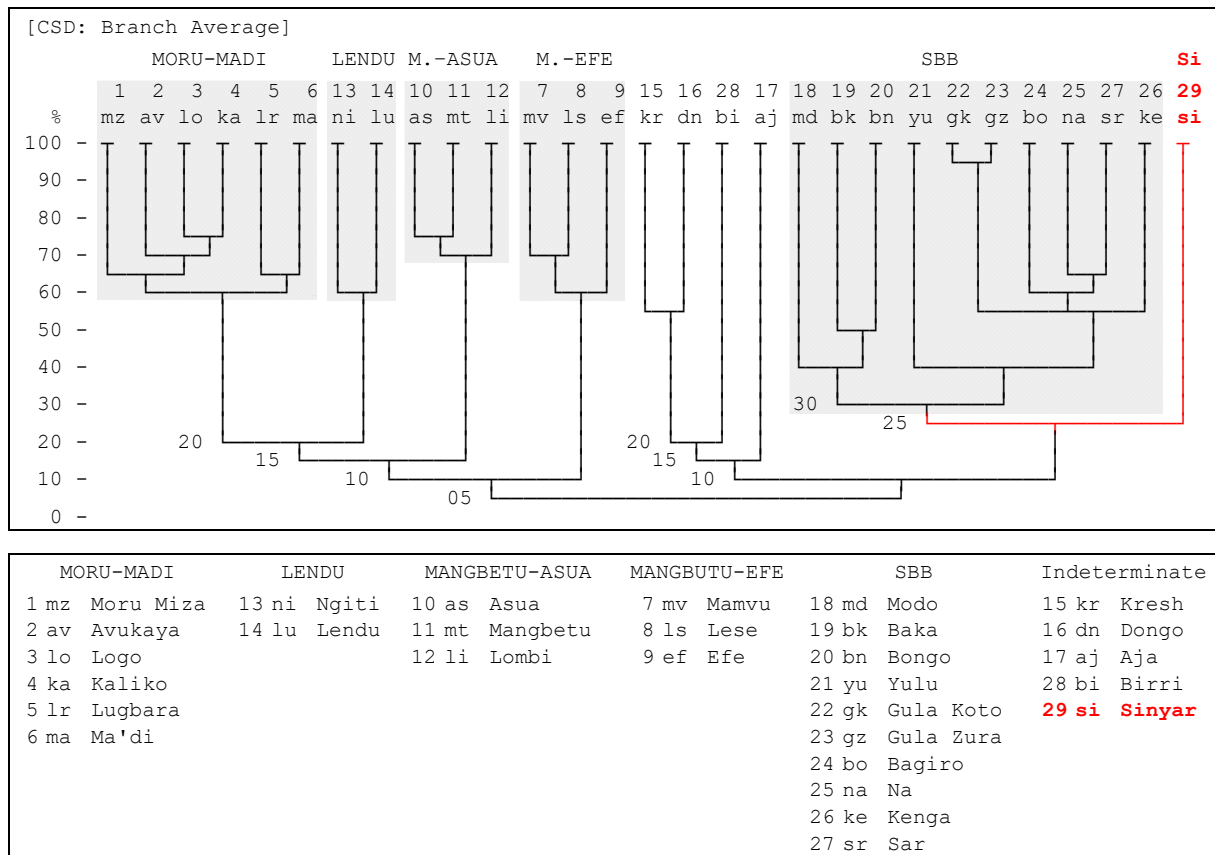


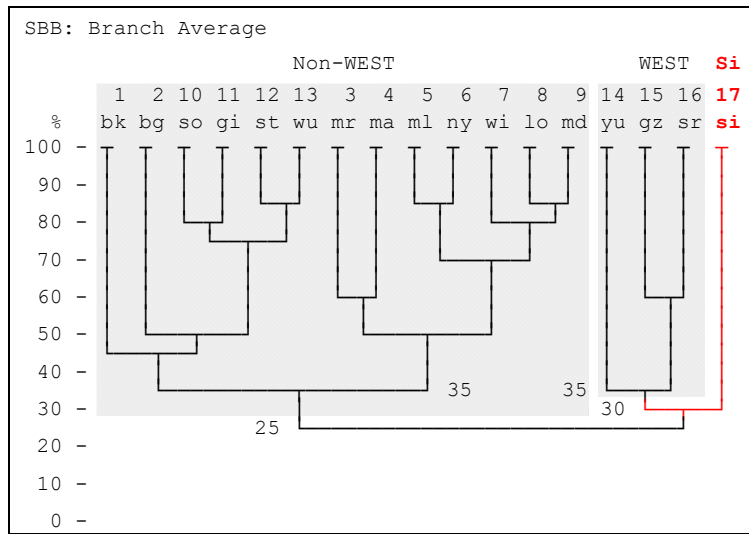
Figure 1. Diagram of SBB historical relationships (revised 2015)

| Sinyar | Modo | Bongo | Yulu | Gula Zura | Sar | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 'kájibil | kòbi | kóbí | sōōb(ə); dōōg(ə) | dōgò | dōgə | buffalo |
| 'ùrà ear 'ìì' leaf | mbílí | mbílí | ēēmb(ə) | mvī ear kām̄v leaf | mbī ear kám̄bè leaf | ear, leaf |
| 'gwààr foot káffá leg | ndí ; gbòndò | gbòndò | sinj(ə) | k̀̀nz | njà | foot, leg |
| sùbó | dò | dò | jää | ḍò | dò | head |
| mùsù' | ḅó | ḅóo | ndāāl(ə) | ḅō | ḅōō | hunger |
| wii' / wíi | úpò | túnú | ōōfə | tēē | tōl | to kill |
| ùmbò / 'ùmbóŋ | úwó | wú | ŋāāgə | ō | ōō | to hear |
| kwanjá' | ŋépé | ŋíhí | ŋēēp(ə) | lēhē | nā | moon |
| 'kwaàlà | mùgù | gò | gōō | gō | míndə | neck |
| 'dikitti' | kòróndó | híndó | gbāāl(ə); kə̀jìy(ə) | nónḍ | ndō | night |
| ñàrmá | kàno | hòmò | sāām(ə) | ngóhō | kón | nose |
| wéerí (-óórú) / wèerí' | ádí | èdí | āādə | èḍ' | èḍə | to rain |
| 'abbàl' | àsí | èhí | ècə | āc | (kàsə adj.) | to be red |
| màggàl / màngàl' | úbògò | ḅògò | wóógə | ḅògò, mòg | ḅògə | to steal |
| 'gòl ~ 'gòl' | tòtó | tòtó | kòt(ə) | kòt | mbāl | (grind)stone |

Table 1. Sinyar: a selection of specific vocabulary



Tables 2-3. Lexical distances: Sinyar and Central Sudanic (2012)



| Non-WEST | | | | WEST | | Si |
|----------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 bk | Baka | 8 lo | Lori | 14 yu | Yulu | 17 si Sinyar |
| 2 bg | Bongo | 9 md | Modo | 15 gz | Gula Zura | |
| 3 mr | Morokodo | 10 so | Sopi | 16 sr | Sar | |
| 4 ma | Mo'da | 11 gi | 'Beli BG | | | |
| 5 ml | Molo | 12 st | 'beli StS | | | |
| 6 ny | Nyamusa | 13 wu | 'beli Wu | | | |
| 7 wi | Wira | | | | | |

Tables 4-5. Lexical distances: Sinyar and SBB (2016)

| | Sinyar | *SBB | Modo | Bongo | Gula Koto |
|---------|----------------|----------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 1S | mààlè ~ màà | *má | má | má | mā |
| 2S | illè | *(?)í | ní | í | ī |
| 3S | nààlè ~ nàà | *nE ? | <i>Masc.</i> bò <i>Fem.</i> lòkó | <i>Masc.</i> bá <i>Fem.</i> hó <i>Neutral</i> nà | ō |
| LOGS | – | (*nÈ) | – | – | nē |
| 1PE | cìngè | *jE | zé | jé | zê |
| 1PD (?) | ciyè | | | | zē |
| 1PI | cèèsà | *jE-PL | | | zēg |
| 2P | sìngè sèèsà | *SE | kpé | hé | sē |
| 3P | nìngè | *d/dE ? | lijè | yé | tē |
| LOGP | – | (*nÈ-PL) | – | – | nēgā |

Table 6. Independent personals (Sinyar: independent nominative)

| | Sinyar | *SBB | Modo | Bongo | Gula Koto |
|---------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1S | -ándá ¹ | *má | má | má | mā |
| 2S | -nún ¹ | *(?)í | yí | í | ī |
| 3S | -náá ¹ | *nE ? | <i>Masc.</i> bò <i>Fem.</i> nì | <i>Masc.</i> bá <i>Fem.</i> hó <i>Neutral</i> à, -V | ō |
| LOGS | – | (*nÈ) | – | né | nó |
| 1PE | -náákú | *jE | zé | jé | zē |
| 1PD (?) | -násà | | | | |
| 1PI | | | | | |
| 2P | -núkú | *SE | yé | hé | sē |
| 3P | -níngè | *d/dE ? | ní | yé | tē |
| LOGP | – | (*nÈ-PL) | – | – | nágō |

Table 7. Associative (‘possessive’) personals (Sinyar: genitive)

2. SBB features in Sinyar

Verbal derivatives

C- form derivatives before vowel initial verbs:

i. Sinyar infinitive prefixed with Ø- (consonant initial verbs) or *t*- (vowel initial verbs):

- (1) *dáár* ‘look at’ > inf. *dààr*¹
màggàl / *màngàl*¹ ‘steal’ > inf. *màggàl* ~ *màggál*
*ikà*¹ / *íkà* ‘seize’ > inf. *t-íkà*
úrkú / *ùrkù*¹ ‘climb’ > inf. *t-úrkú*

SBB languages derive infinitives with Ø- (consonant initial verbs) or a consonant (modo *t*-, yulu *l*-, others *k*-) in case of vowel initial verbs:

- (2) Modo (no consonant initial verb)
unyù ‘eat’ > inf. *t-únyù*
Yulu
kēēmā ‘fear’ > inf. *kēēm(ā)*
èèdā ‘see’ > inf. *l- èèdā*
Gula Zura
tūv ‘spit’ > inf. *tūv*
èt ‘open’ > inf. *k-èt*
Sar
mbātā ‘refuse’ > inf. *mbātā*
àsō ‘fall’ > inf. *k-àsō*

ii. Sinyar derive adjectives by prefixing *k*- to vowel initial verbs:

- (3) *áffá* ‘be sharp’ > *k-áffá* ‘sharp’
*àbbàl*¹ ‘be red’ > *k-àbbàl*¹ ‘red’

This is probably also an old feature of SBB languages although the device has become lost (or frozen) and maybe merged with the *k*- formative of infinitives/nouns in many ‘western’ languages (like Gula Zura, Bagiro, and Sar):

- (4) Modo²
 èyí ‘be cold’ > *k-èyí* ‘cold’
 Bongo
 èmbì ‘be fat’ > *k-èmbì* ‘fat’
 Yulu
 njèʔá ‘dry up’ > *njèʔ(ə)* ‘dry’
 ēyà ‘be wide’ > *k-ēy(ə)* ‘wide’
 Gula Zura
 èd ‘rain (v.)’ > *kéd* ‘rain (n.)’
 āc ‘be/become red, ripe’ > *kāc* ‘redness (?)’
 Bagiro
 àsū ‘be bad’ > inf. *k-àsū*; *k-àsū* ‘badness, bad’
 Sar
 *aKε ‘be red’ > *kàsə* ‘brown red’

Subject focalizer

Both Sinyar and Yulu share a verb prefix *k(V)*- to mark focus on the subject:

Sinyar

- (5) mùsù¹-n wìŋ¹-mà-tá
 hunger-NOM.SG 3.IPFV.hurt-1S.ACC-NEG
 ‘I am not hungry.’

- (6) ¹ingá-n k-ùŋ¹-là
 what?-NOM.SG FOC-3.IPFV.hurt-2S.ACC
 ‘WHAT does hurt you?’

Yulu

- (7) bīisá òòsə èjə
 dog.DEF 3.eat meat.DEF
 ‘The dog ate the meat.’
- (8) bīisá k-ōōsə èjə
 dog.DEF FOC-3.eat meat.DEF
 ‘The DOG ate the meat.’

Compound verbs

Sinyar may combine a verb and one or several ‘postverbs’ to form compound verbs that behave as one unit regarding their different markers: preposed subject indices and dependency markers, postposed verb plural, object indices and/or negation.

Some postverbs also work as isolated verbs (e.g. *ndúúr* ‘limping’ < *ndúúr* ‘to limp’ below), some others do not (e.g. *fà* ‘Past negation’ < ? below), in which case their verbal origin is only deduced from their morphological behaviour.

Semantically a compound verb combines the different meanings of its components, the postverb expressing several values of the process as ‘orientation/motion’, ‘degree’, ‘evaluation’, ‘modality/quality’, ‘aspect/duration’, etc. Frozen postverbs are particularly subject to grammaticalisation (e.g. ‘Past negation’, ‘Inchoative’, etc.).

Illustration:

- (9) *àbì* {3.IPFV.go} ‘(S)he is going.’
m-àbì {1S-ipfv.go} ‘I am going.’
n-àbì-sà {2-IPFV.go-PL} ‘You (pl.) are going.’
n-àbì-sà-tá {2-IPFV.go-PL-NEG} ‘You (pl.) are not going.’
- (10) *ndúúr* ‘to limp’ > *ndúúr* ‘limping, with a limp’
àbì.ndúúr {3.IPFV.go.limp} ‘(S)he is walking with a limp.’

² Andersen (1981:48) analyses these forms as dependent verbs (prefixed with *k-*) that may be regarded as shortened relative clauses when used in this way.

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | <i>m-àbì.ndúúr</i> | {1S-IPFV.go.limp} | ‘I am walking with a limp.’ |
| | <i>n-àbì.ndúúr-sà</i> | {2-IPFV.go.limp-PL} | ‘You (pl.) are walking with a limp.’ |
| | <i>n-àbì.ndúúr-sà-tá</i> | {2-IPFV.go.limp-PL-NEG} | ‘You (pl.) are not walking with a limp.’ |
- (11) ? > *.fà* ‘Past negation’ (formally applied to the Imperfective form of the verb)
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | <i>àbì.fà</i> | {3.IPFV.go.PNEG} | ‘(S)he did not go.’ |
| | <i>m-àbì.fà</i> | {1S-ipfv.go.PNEG} | ‘I did not go.’ |
| | <i>n-àbì.fà-sà</i> | {2-IPFV.go.PNEG-PL} | ‘You (pl.) did not go.’ |
| | <i>m-àbì.ndúúr.fà</i> | {1S-IPFV.go.limp.PNEG} | ‘I was not walking with a limp.’ |
| | <i>n-àbì.ndúúr.fà-sà</i> | {2-IPFV.go.limp.PNEG-PL} | ‘You (pl.) were not walking with a limp.’ |

The SBB languages Yulu and Gula show similar facts (Boyeldieu 2007). Example from Yulu:³

- (12) *njààmá* ‘to sit’
.lá?à ‘cooling’ (postverb only, factitive of *à?à* ‘to become/be cool’)
 > *njààmá.lá?à* ‘to rest (one’s body)’
- (13) *nā-tā-njààmó.lá?à-kē cō yáà-tè*
 LOG-DEP-sit.cool-PL NEG body-3P
 ‘[...say that] ...themselves do not rest (their body).’

In Modo, several ‘long forms’ of verbs and their similarity with other verbs suggest that compounding may also have played an active role at an earlier stage of the language. Compare for instance the initial segments in (14):

- (14) *áwó* ‘breathe’
ìndàwó ‘rest, relax’

or the final segments in (15):

- (15) *òpí* ‘twist, unlock, drive a car’
òpìrì ‘twist’

As has been seen, several features – from lexicon or morphosyntax – exposed in these two first sections point to a particular closeness of Sinyar with languages of Yulu-Gula type.

3. Features specific to Sinyar

Noun plural in (-*ŋa*)

The -*ŋa* plural marker (of Fur origin?) may be dropped if number marked otherwise (irregular plural suffix -*aar* or plural case marker, see below):

- (16) *ʔnà* /pl. *ʔnà-ŋà* ‘thing’
ʔgòl /pl. *ʔgòl-ŋà* ‘stone, grindstone’
kártí /pl. *kártí-ŋà* ‘elephant’

Noun plurals in -*aar*

Some nouns referring to animates have a special plural marker -*aar*:

- (17) *nímmi* /pl. *nímáár(-ŋà)* ‘sister’
ʔngùbbò /pl. *ʔngùbàár(-ŋà)* ‘old woman’
ḃìsì /pl. *ḃìsàár(-ŋà)* ‘dog’
ʔdōŋ /pl. *dōŋáár(-ŋà)* ‘bull’
ʔkòdqù /pl. *kòdáár(-ŋà)* ‘ram’

Double radical-verbs

Some Sinyar verbs have two complementary radicals following an ‘imperfective/past’ distribution of the TAM forms. In most cases the 2^d radical is characterized by some affixation of a nasal element. Examples:

- (18) *érbí* / *èrmbì* ‘run’
sùdò / *súnjó* ‘lie (down)’

³ While only 69 postverbs have been identified in Sinyar so far, more than 200 of them have been recorded in Yulu.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>wìfè' / wìjè'</i> | 'beget, bear' |
| <i>'dùñ' / ndùñ</i> | 'crunch (fruit, vegetable)' |
| <i>'jùwè' / njúwé</i> | 'cut (with knife)' |
| <i>úgò' / 'ùngón</i> | 'meet, find, get' |

| | 'to run' | 'to cut' | 'to find, get' |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Imperfective | érbí | 'jùwè' | úgò' |
| Future | érbí (= Present) | júwé' | úgò' (= Present) |
| Past | èmbì' | njúwé | 'ùngón |
| Perfective | èmbì'yà | njúwá'à | 'ùngónjá' |
| Imperative (2 ^d sg.) | èrbí' | 'jùwè | 'ùgò |
| Prohibitive (2 ^d sg.) | k-érbí-tá | 'kù-jùwè'-tà | k-úgò'-tà |

Table 8. Distribution of verb double radicals according to TAM forms (3^d pers. sg.)

Factitive verbs suffixed with -oò↓/-uù↓

| | | | | |
|------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (19) | <i>ánjú' / ànjù'</i> | 'not have' | <i>ánjúù' / ànjúú'</i> | 'let not have' |
| | <i>árfá' / -</i> | 'be dry' | <i>árfòò' / árfóó'</i> | 'let dry, make dry' |
| | <i>èttè' / èttè'</i> | 'burn' | <i>èttòò' / èttóó'</i> | 'let burn' |
| | <i>icél' / icél'</i> | 'be/become full' | <i>icèliù' / icèliúú'</i> | 'fill, make full' |
| | <i>ndó'llè' / ndòllé'</i> | 'learn' | <i>ndóólúù' / ndòòlúú'</i> | 'make learn, teach (ditransitive)' |

Intensive/frequentative in -r-

Infix *-r-* expressing intensivity or frequency of the process; active derivation but numerous intensive/frequentative verbs without simple form:

| | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| (20) | <i>dákkwá' / dàkkwà'</i> | 'knock (once) with the phalanx' | <i>dárkwá' / dárkwà'</i> | 'knock with phalanxes (several times)' |
| | <i>dūlò' / dūlò'</i> | 'spin (of head)' | <i>dūrlò' / dūrlò'</i> | 'spin (freq.)' |
| | <i>wii' / wii'</i> | 'kill' | <i>wirù' / wírú'</i> | 'kill in great number, exterminate' |
| | ? | | <i>górnú' / ngórnú'</i> | 'snore' |
| | ? | | <i>mbàrbàl' / mbàrbál'</i> | 'tremble, shiver, shake (of cold, fear)' |

Double case marker system

i. Nominal phrases whose head = common noun:

| | (absolute) | Nominative | Adverbial |
|-----|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Sg. | <i>unmarked</i> | -n / (')-n̄ / -Ní / (')-Nì | -tí / (')-ti |
| Pl. | | -sí / (')-sì | |

Table 9. Case markers for common nouns

ii. Nominal phrases whose head = proper name:

| | (absolute) | Nominative | Genitive | Accusative | Adverbial ⁴ |
|-----|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Sg. | <i>unmarked</i> | -n / (')-n̄ / -lè | -nà' / -nâ' ⁵ | -(y)àà | °-lèè |
| Pl. | | -ngè | | -ngàá | °-ngèèr |

Table 10. Case markers for proper/individual names

⁴ The sign ° indicates that the markers neutralise the effect of the preceding downstep if any, e.g. *Kájjè'* 'Kajje (proper name of woman)' > *Kájjè-lèè* (and not **Kájjè'-lèè*) 'with Kajje'.

⁵ The conditioning of the two variants *-nà' / -nâ'* is somewhat complex: 1. If the Genitive marker is final, its form is *-nâ'* in every case. 2. If it is covered by a second marker (NOM or ADV) relating to the preceding head noun, its form is *-nà'* when suffixed to a proper name ending with L¹, and *-nâ'* in the other cases (name ending with H or L). See examples (14) above, as well as (37-38) and Table 3b below.

Proper names include:

- personal names (also personified animals), ‘God’, ‘chief’, ‘grandmother’, names of places, rivers, mountains, and countries;
- ‘who?’, ‘what’s-his/her-name, So-and-So’;
- some animal names: ‘(home) cat’, ‘(home) duck’, ‘fox’, ‘owl sp.’, ‘bird sp.’, ‘stork’, ‘locust sp.’ (several names), ‘chameleon’, ‘fish sp.’;
- points of the compass borrowed from Arabic.

4. Summary of features

| SBB-like | SBB-unlike |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – part of the lexicon (including ‘basic’) – part of the personal pronouns (namely in the nominative) – infinitive in <i>t-</i> (vowel-initial verbs) – adjectives and nominal forms in <i>k-</i> (vowel-initial verbs) – compound verbs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – part of the lexicon (including ‘basic’) – part of the personal pronouns (namely associative) – some double (formally related) radicals for verbs distributed according to tense/aspect – intensive verbs infixed with <i>-r-</i> – factitive verbs suffixed with <i>-oo/-uu</i> – usual noun plural in <i>-ŋá ~ -ŋà</i> – some noun plurals in <i>-aar/-oor</i> (animates) – case marker system |

Table 11. SBB-like/-unlike features in Sinyar

4. Sinyar adstrate or substrate? Tone patterns as evidence for a substrate?

| | SBB | Sinyar | |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| a) | *SBB *11 *OCC *11 | | |
| N/009 | *pādū | 'fòdū | fire |
| N/011 | *dūlū | 'cùl | duiker |
| N/016 | *ùsi | ìssi' | milk |
| N/017 | *kāmò | kwòm' | eye, face |
| N/028 | *káRyà | kàryà | hartebeest |
| N/032 | | 'májjà | honey-guide (bird) |
| N/036 | *mòtò | miti' | base; backside, buttocks |
| N/037 | *mÒmÒ | 'mòmmò | woman, in-law / women |
| N/040 | *tálò | tàál | dew |
| N/683 | *ngùrà | 'ngùrà | <i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> (tree) |
| b) | *SBB *12 *OCC *12 | | |
| N/058 | *tìkpī | tíkí | bowel, intestine |
| N/059 | *kùrū | kùúr | worm, maggot, caterpillar |
| N/063 | *tārō | 'tòòr' | up, upright / top |
| N/084 | *mÀsē | mààsí | spear |
| N/087 | *kùdā | kùjá | thirst / water |
| N/093 | *Sālī | 'wèl | bird (gen.) |
| N/094 | *bādū | 'fòdū | warthog |
| N/095 | *ngùjū | 'kùrjū | flour |
| N/096 | *Sādī | wèrjī | urine |
| N/098 | *Nèjī | nijí | beer |
| N/103 | *Sānā | 'ānnā | skin |
| N/107 | *Sùbū | ìbí | oil, fat |
| N/109 | *idā | 'ìjjā | meat |
| N/121 | *ndÒgÒ | ndággá' | woven piece of fence |
| N/123 | | 'kaccà | salt |
| N/127 | *kàtā | náfá | each other |
| N/128 | *Nàpā | 'ndisààr | broom |
| N/129 | *ndisā | kàmbàl | leaves / wing |
| N/144 | *mbiyā | máryá | beard |
| N/546 | *kārō | kàár | frog, toad |
| c) | *SBB *22 *OCC *22 | | |
| N/144 | *kĀnjē | kwùnjó | fish |
| N/199 | *kāgā | kāggá | tree, wood |
| N/200 | *kūmū | kūmúl | navel |
| N/202 | *Sūlū | súl | mosquito |
| N/203 | *Kīpō | kùffò | seed(s) |
| N/206 | *ngērī | ngiír | firewood |
| N/207 | *Sīlī | illí | prickle, claw, finger / hand, arm |
| N/208 | *SŌmŌ | simmé | rabbit, hare |
| N/210 | *kākō | kárkí | sugar cane, sweet cane |
| N/212 | | 'àngwà' ~ àngwà | guest |
| d) | *SBB *21a *OCC *21a | | |
| N/159 | *NĒIĒ | lāálá | wind |
| N/160 | *ōisi | ōisi' | dog |
| N/168 | *kādō | kādū' | calabash / placenta |
| N/171 | *bījā | fiyá | goat |
| N/208 | *Nāmi | nímmí | sister |
| e) | *SBB *21b *OCC *21b | | |
| N/003 | *kāgbà | 'kwàgàr | leopard |
| N/026 | | kòfù' | knee |
| N/049 | *kādā | 'kájjà | sun |
| N/052 | *kājù | 'kòjjù | horn |
| N/177 | *tārà | tààr' (tààr ?) | mouth; entrance; language |
| N/178 | *tāRnqā | cànjál' | guinea fowl |
| N/179 | *kŌRlò | sùrrù | giraffe |
| N/188 | | 'ngòdò | <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> (tree) |
| N/489 | *mūjù | 'mòjjò | antbear, aardvark |

Table 12. SBB / Sinyar tones compared: Nouns (1=L, 2=H)

| | SBB | Sinyar | |
|-------|------------------------------|---|---|
| a) | *SBB *A (*12) | | |
| V/009 | *ùbū | tùbbù / tùmbù [!] [1a] | cover with earth, burry, sow in holes |
| V/010 | *ògbō | ùrgù / ùrngù [!] [1a] | laugh |
| V/011 | *idā | wírjā (-ùrjā) / wírjā [!] [1a] | tie, bind |
| b) | *SBB *B (*22) | | |
| V/020 | *ijō | wíjā (-ùfā) / wíjā [!] [1a] | plait |
| V/022 | *icō | wiccè (-ùccò) / wiccè [!] [1a] | fall |
| V/025 | *ūbā | ùbā / ùmbā [!] [1a] | make, mould, build |
| V/030 | *ūḡmā | ùḡḡwā / ùḡḡwā [!] [1a] | roast, warm up, be hot / hurt |
| V/034 | *igbō | ùrbò / ùrmbò [!] [1a] | bark |
| c) | *OCC *AB (*12) | | |
| V/014 | *Sàdī | wèrjì (-òrjù) / wèrnjì [1b] | urinate |
| V/017 | *àḡmā ‘burn’ | àḡḡwā / àḡḡwā [!] [1a] | burn / burn (intrans.) |
| V/054 | *-d- | nḡḡjì / nḡḡjì [!] [1a] | sneeze |
| V/085 | *ibō | ùrbò / ùrmbò [!] [1a] | send, commission |
| V/150 | *ùḡā | wiccā (-ùccā) / wiccā [!] [1a] | hit (with fist) / hit, strike |
| V/151 | *Ábē | íbbí [!] / ímbí [4a] | pass, surpass |
| d) | *SBB*A~*B? | | |
| V/037 | *tèdē | wèdē [!] (-òdò [!]) / wénjé [2a] | vomit |
| V/046 | *Ádē | wèdē (-òdò) / wénjé [!] [1a] | pull (out), extract |
| V/066 | *Gàlī | ùḡòl / ùḡòl [2x ?] | know |
| e) | *SBB *C (*11) *OCC *C (*11) | | |
| V/069 | *ŌŌ | willè [!] (-ùllò) / willé [2a] | die |
| V/071 | *ŌḡŌ | wíjā [!] (-ùḡ [!]) / wíjā [2c] | eat; hurt |
| V/079 | *ùlù | wíl [!] (-ùl [!]) / wíl [2b] | swallow |
| V/079 | *èlì | wírli [!] (-ùrlù [!]) / wírli [2a] | swallow |
| V/082 | *ÈrÈ | wíré (-úró) / wíré [!] [3a] | twist / knead, mix (dough, etc.); twist (a tie); winnow |
| V/086 | *ÈmbÈ | ùmbò / ùmbóḡ [1c] | find, get / hear, listen to |
| V/088 | *ikà | ikà [!] / íká [2a] | take, catch |
| V/092 | *ÈmÈ | ùmmò [!] / úmmó [2a] | cry, moan |
| V/093 | *dŌḡŌ | ‘jùḡ [!] / njùḡ [2b] | bite |
| V/143 | *àKì | àkki [!] / ákki [2a] | be ripe, ripen |
| V/144 | | wisì (-ùsù) / wisì [!] [1a] | wound, stab, spear |
| V/147 | | wíjé [!] (-ùfò [!]) / wíjé [!] [2x] | bear, give birth |
| V/194 | | íjjā [!] / ínjā [4a] | count, measure |
| V/208 | | èèrè [!] / éééré [2a] | sing |
| f) | *SBB *D2 (*21) *OCC *D (*21) | | |
| V/098 | *ijā | wíjā (-úfā) / wíjā [!] [3a] | cut ears of crops, harvest |
| V/117 | *òkù | úrkù / úrkù [!] [3a] | climb |
| V/124 | *ibò | nḡùbò / nḡùmbò [!] [1a] | meet |
| V/129 | *iKà | wírcá (-úrcá) / wírcá [!] [3a] | fry |
| V/130 | *ndīfò | nḡúfó / nḡùnjò [!] [3a] | ask |
| V/409 | | wiccì [!] (-ùccù) / wiccí [2a] | burn (trans.) |

Table 13. SBB / Sinyar tones compared: Verbs (1=L, 2=H)

Glosses and abbreviations

| | | | |
|-----|--|-------|------------------------|
| °- | neutralisation of preceding tonal downstep | FEM. | Feminine |
| ! | Tonal downstep | FOC | Focalizer (of subject) |
| 1P | 1 st person plural | IPFV | Imperfective |
| 1PD | 1 st person plural (dual) | LOG | Logophoric |
| 1PE | 1 st person plural (exclusive) | LOGP | Logophoric plural |
| 1PI | 1 st person plural (inclusive) | LOGS | Logophoric singular |
| 1S | 1 st person singular | MASC. | Masculine |
| 2P | 2 ^d person plural | NEG | Negative, Negation |

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| 2s | 2 ^d person singular | NOM | Nominative |
| 3 | 3 ^d person | PFV | Perfective |
| 3P | 3 ^d person plural | pl., PL | Plural |
| 3S | 3 ^d person singular | PNEG | Past negation |
| ACC | Accusative | PNEG | Past negative |
| DEF | Definite | SBB | Sara-Bongo-Bagirmi |
| DEP | Dependent verb form | sg., SG | Singular |

References

- Andersen, Torben. 1981. *A Grammar of Modo, A Preliminary Sketch*. University of Aalborg (Denmark).
- Boyeldieu, Pascal. 2000. *La langue bagiro (République Centrafricaine), Systématique, textes et lexique*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang (Schriften zur Afrikanistik/Research in African Studies, 4).
- Boyeldieu, Pascal. 2000. *Identité tonale et filiation des langues sara-bongo-baguirmiennes (Afrique centrale)*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag (SUGIA, Beiheft 10).
- Boyeldieu, Pascal. 2015. Case alignment(s) in Sinyar. In A. Mietzner & A. Storch (eds) *Nilo-Saharan: Models and Descriptions*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag: 21-36.
- Boyeldieu Pascal & Pierre Nougayrol. 2004. Les marques personnelles des langues SBB : traits systématiques et perspectives historiques. *Systèmes de marques personnelles en Afrique* (D. Ibrizimow et G. Segerer eds). Louvain-Paris: Peeters (Afrique et Langage): 23-42.
- Boyeldieu P. 2007. Compound Verbs and Modalities of Process in Yulu (Central Sudanic). In *Advances in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics. Proceedings of the 8th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium, University of Hamburg, 22-25 August, 2001* (M. Reh & D.L. Payne eds). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag (Nilo-Saharan 22): 25-39.
- Boyeldieu Pascal, Pierre Nougayrol & Pierre Palayer. 2006. *Lexique comparatif historique des langues sara-bongo-baguirmiennes*. Paris, CNRS-LLACAN. Document électronique : <http://sumale.vjf.cnrs.fr/SBB/>
- Bender, Marvin Lionel. 1992. Central Sudanic Segmental and Lexical Reconstructions. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* (Frankfurt), 29: 5-61.
- Doornbos, Paul. [1980?]. *The Language of the Senyar*. Typewritten: 15 p.
- Doornbos, Paul. & Marvin Lionel Bender. 1983. Languages of Wadai-Darfur. In Marvin Lionel Bender (ed.) *Nilo-Saharan Language Studies*. East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University: 42-79.
- Doornbos, Paul. 1982. A Sinyar Tale of Friendship. *Sudan Texts Bulletin* (Coleraine, New University of Ulster), vol. 5, 36-46.
- Doornbos, Paul. 1984 (2nd ed.). Sinyar. In Richard V. Weekes (ed.), *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press: 690-695. (Available online at <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/5978459/o-aceh-books-website/87>)
- Güldemann, Tom (ed.). 2018. *The Languages and Linguistics of Africa*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Haaland, Gunnar. 1978. Ethnic Groups and Language Use in Darfur. In Robin Thelwall (ed.) *Aspects of Language in the Sudan*. Occasional Papers in Linguistics and Language Learning, no 5. Belfast: The New University of Ulster: 181-199.
- Nougayrol, Pierre. 1999. *Les parlers gula (Centrafrique, Soudan, Tchad), Grammaire et lexique*. Paris: CNRS Editions.
- Palayer Pierre. 1970 (avec la collaboration de M. Fournier et E. Moundo). *Eléments de grammaire sar (Tchad)*. Lyon-Fort-Archambault: Afrique et Langage-Collège Charles Lwanga (Etudes linguistiques 2).
- Palayer Pierre. 1992. *Dictionnaire Sar-Français (Tchad)*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Persson Andrew M. et Janet R. Persson, 1991, *Modo-English Dictionary with Grammar*, Nairobi, SIL.
- Thomason, Sarah Grey & Terrence Kaufman. 1988. *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press.
- Tucker, Archibald N. & Margaret A. Bryan. 1956. *The Non-Bantu Languages of North-Eastern Africa (with a Supplement on The Non-Bantu languages of Southern Africa by E.O.J. Westphal)*. London-New York-Cape Town: OUP for IAI.