



BENA-MBOI IS BENUE-CONGO

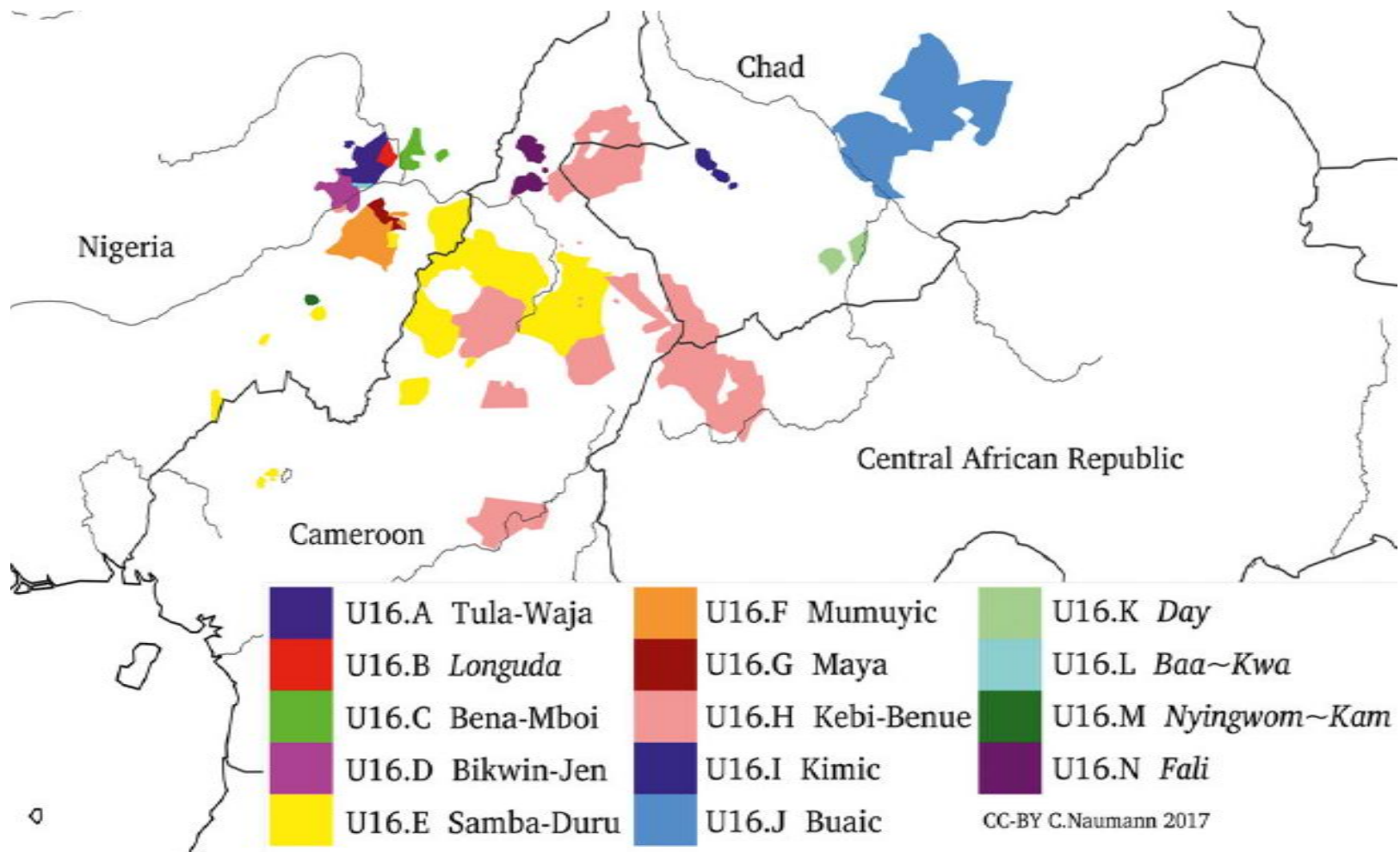


Dmitry Idiatov & Mark Van de Velde

LLACAN (CNRS – INALCO)

dmitry.idiatov@cnrs.fr

mark.vandavelde@cnrs.fr



Map 1. Adamawa pool (Güldemann 2018:201)

- Adamawa “**pool**” (Güldemann 2018)
 - “Genealogical pools are not established lineages in the above sense but rather pragmatically useful/necessary entities that mostly arise from the history of African language classification” (2018:83)
 - “the evidence for an Adamawa lineage as well as for the various subgroups is meager and unconvincing; for non-specialists, the proposals are in fact impossible to understand and evaluate” (2018:202)
- Adamawa “**soup**”...



- Adamawa as **Niger-Congo “dustbin”** of NE Nigeria, N Cameroon and S Chad
- **Historical accident...**
 - The languages that were **described first** and (so far) best, such as Mumuye and Mbum, do **not** have a full-fledged **Bantu-like gender system** with class prefixes or immediately **obvious traces** thereof
 - **Beyond some common NC roots** and vague similarities in numerals and pronominals, **lexical cognates** (let alone regular correspondences) with the robust BC languages do **not strike the eye**

- 10 presumably **common NC** lexical roots (Seegerer 2008)

1 TU(P) : to spit

2 MED ~ MOD : to swallow

3 NYU : to drink

4 DUM : to bite

5 TE : tree

6 NYI(N) : tooth

7 TU : ear

8 DEM : tongue

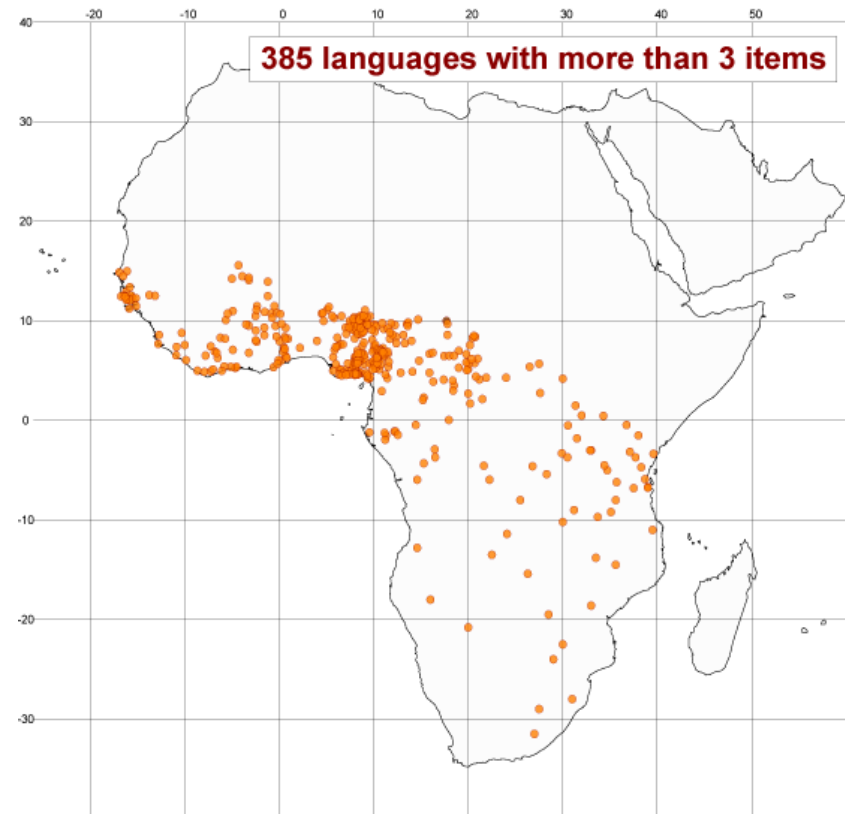
9 DI : to eat

10 TAT : three

- Bamana (Mande) *dún* ‘eat’ is not DUM, but from the compound *[mouth-extract] as found in SWM and reflected in the various stages of fusion of this compound across Greater Manding

- The **probability** to have **at least 3 items** out of 1565 languages:
16 ~ 29 languages (Seegerer 2008)

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- 7 TU : ear
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- Several of these 10 presumably **common NC** lexical roots do **not** show up in the typical “**basic vocabulary**” wordlists, such as Swadesh lists

- 1 TU(P) : to spit
- 2 MED ~ MOD : to swallow
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- **Stability** (“**basicness**”) of various vocabulary items does **vary** across language families and areas:
 - Interrogative pronominals, such as ‘who?’ and ‘what?’, e.g. Mayan vs. Indo-European or Turkic (cf. Idiatov 2011 and the workshop organized at ICHL in Osaka)
 - ‘water’ in Bantoid vs. Mande or Indo-European
- Standardized “**basic vocabulary**” **wordlists**, such as Swadesh lists, are useful **classificatory tools** for **closely related languages** (e.g., Jen cluster), but are much less so for relations of more considerable time depths.



- Paradigms of **short functional elements**, such as class markers and personal indexes, can be indicative but tend to be used **(very) liberally**...
 - similarity requires a lot of phonological underspecification
 - stems are very short
 - but at the same time, formal reinforcement with subsequent fusion is common (cf. PB personal pronominals Kamba Muzenga 2003; Bena-Yungur pronominals)
 - many irregular changes (analogical levelling, formal erosion, etc.)
- Humans are biologically hard-wired to see patterns...
- Unless we can go beyond stating vague similarities, such evidence remains **ancillary**...

- Geographically, **Benue-Congo** is the most likely candidate...

Starostin (2012): Tula shares most cognates with Beboïd

- A relation with the **Ubangi pool** has been suggested (“Adamawa-Ubangi”)
- A relation with **Gur** has been proposed as well (Kleinewillinghöfer 1996)

- Mostly **Bena-Yungur** data, since we have only limited data on the other Bena-Mboi varieties
- **Reconstructions of proto-languages** proposed for other language families in the region, such as **PB**, **PEG**, PJ, ?PCG, ?PBC
- Just the cognates we happened to come across
- Some data from modern languages
- Numerous promising cognate sets with various languages from the Adamawa pool, but we have not gone through the lexicons consistently as there are no internal reconstructions for these groups



- Bantu Lexical Reconstructions 3 (labeled as **PB3**), not Guthrie's CB
- Vowel system /i ɪ e a o u u/ (rather than /i e ε a ɔ o u/)
- Problems with the reconstruction of coronal and bilabial stops (“**double reflexes**”), most likely **ɖ* and **ɓ* need to be reconstructed
- Problems with the reconstruction of **g* vs. **k* in various roots
- **PB3** **j* covers a number of different cognate sets with a range of possible values proposed in the literature, such as **y*, **ʃ*, **z*, and zero (we would add **s*).
- TBU = *μ* and 2 tone levels **L** and **H**
- **Noun stems** are reconstructed with CV, CVV and CV(N)CV shapes preceded by a **class prefix**
- **Verbs** are reconstructed with CV and CV(N)C shapes (**1 tone**) followed by a **Final Vowel morpheme**, whose shape and tone is not reconstructed



- Elias et al. (1984) and (for a subset of EG languages) Hyman (1974)
- Vowel system /i ɪ e a o u/ (rather than /i e ε a ɔ o u/)
- TBU = μ and 2 tone levels L and H
- Similar problems with the reconstruction of consonants
- Typical stem structure is CVC^T (with a final floating tone)
- A limited number of vowel-initial nominal stems
- Class markers used with noun stems are mostly prefixes, but one also finds suffixes



- Shimizu (1980)
- 5 vowel system /i e a o u/
- No implosives, but there are fricatives and approximants, NC_[+voice] clusters, palatalized and labialized consonants (/Cy/ and /Cw/ clusters)
- TBU = μ and 3 tone levels L, M and H, but few etymons are reconstructed with their tones
- Most noun and verb stems are -CVC-
- Noun stems have CV- class prefixes, -V class suffixes are said to have developed at later stages

- **Proto Benue-Congo** by De Wolf (1971) was an interesting first attempt to PBC reconstruction...
- **Proto Central Gur** by Manessy (1969, 1975, 1979) is difficult to evaluate (and to compare with) given the extreme vagueness of many reconstructions (CV or CVC stems with many variants for vowels and consonants for each stem and no tone)



- The focus is on **Bantoid** (PB, PEG, and modern languages) due to the availability of comparative data and its higher reliability
- The particularly **straightforward** nature of most segmental, tonal and semantic **correspondences** is **remarkable for the relevant time-depth** (e.g., PB \approx ca. 4500 BP, Bantoid \approx ca. 6900 BP, cf. Grollemund et al. 2015; Bostoen et al. 2015).
- The most complex correspondence so far is **PB *CVNC(V) || BY CŨ:**
- Further supported by **ancillary similarities** in **noun class marking** and **personal indexes**



BY (and other BM)

gànà ‘speak’

PB3 **gàn* ‘tell a tale’; Vute *gàn-* ‘tell a tale’; Mumuye *gnā-lé* ‘(vt) tell, inform’

gàmà ‘gather somewhere (about people, animals)’

PB3 **gam* ‘be in contact’; Mbum *ngàm* ‘(v) allier’, *ngámà* ‘alliance’

bìn-ò ‘song; singing; drumming’ (DTS^{B~A}), *bìnì* ‘sing; play a drum’

*HL

PB3 **bín* ‘dance and sing’, **bín-à* ‘song and dance’; Vute *bín-* ‘dance a war dance’

ké: ‘roan antelope (Hippotragus equinus)’ (DTSA)

PB3 **kíá* ‘antelope (sp)’ (cl 9/10)

ké: ‘untie’

*LH or *H

PEG **ké?* ~ **kè?* ‘untie’ (Hyman 1974), **-kV́k-* and **-ka-CI* ‘loosen’ (Elias et al. 1984)

kě̃: ‘shine’

*HL

PB3 **kéng* ‘shine’



ṅgō:mō 'squeeze'

**nk-*, *HL

PB3 **kám* 'squeeze, wring', DER **kám-ud* 'wring, squeeze';
 Nooni (Beboid) *kám* 'squeeze; wring'; Proto Jukunoid **kám*
 'squeeze, wring' (Shimizu 1980) (or rather **kámu*)

bìt-ô '(adj) raw, fresh,
 unripe, bad character'

*HL

PB3 **-bìcì* 'raw'

dǎ:-rá 'bad omen'
 (DTS^B)

*LH, **dàg-*

PB3 **dàg* 'promise; foretell; say farewell; make testament',
 DER **dàg-í* 'word of ill omen', **dàg-á* 'promise', **dàg-ò*
 'promise; law, affair', **dàg-ú* 'medicine', **dàg-ud* 'work by
 magic; divine; foretell; give medicine'

dǎ: 'lick'

PB3 **dámb* 'lick'

pám-rá 'horn (used to
 alert or call for help, e.g.
 by a hunter in danger)'

PB3 **pám* 'shout'; Nizaa (Mambiloid) *pám* 'shout'

pw-é 'knife'

PB3 **píú* (regional *píó*) 'knife' (cl 7/8, 11/10)

lōb-rō '(soft, watery)
 mud', *lōblōb-rá* 'swamp'

tómó 'do'

tũ: (BY), *tũ:* (LR) 'rat'

tuŋ (Mboi) 'ear'

dìò 'house'

PB3 **dòbá* 'soil, clay, mud; world' (cl 5/6), itself probably a
 DER of PB3 **dòb* 'be wet'; Vute *dǒb* 'dirt, earth';

*LH or *H

PB3 **túm* 'send' (also 'send somebody to do something'),
 DER **túm-a* 'message, commission' (cl 9), **túm-ík* '(v)
 work', **túm-ù* 'commission; work' (cl 11)

Gimme (Samba-Duru; Dieu 2016): *tòm* '(vt) travailler;
 charger, commissionner qqn', *tòm-zē* 'travail; commission';
 Kam *tōm* 'send' and *à-tōm* 'message' (*LH).

*LH

PB3 **tóndó* 'mouse sp., rat sp.'; Kuteb (Jukunoid) *ù-tùm* 'rat'
 with Shimizu (1980) considering it as a reflex of Proto
 Jukunoid **tùm* 'horse-tail'

PEG **túŋ^H* 'ear'

(*o* is part of the stem; *io* sequence is marginal in stems)

PB **jíkò* or rather REF *°díkò* 'fireplace; country' (cl 5/6); PEG
**dìk^H* 'place'; Pere *lī.gò* 'house'; Wam *dýé.ké* 'house'

gòngò ‘become tired’

PEG **gòn^H* ‘illness’; PB3 **gòn* ‘lie down; snore; sleep’, DER ‘be ill’ (zones A C D)

gùwā ‘dry season’

PEG **gùk^H* ‘dry season’; PB3 **gú.m ~ gù.m* ‘be(come) dry, hard’

kát-ó ‘axe’ (DTSA)

DTSA < *DTSB: Laala of Yang < *kāt-é* >
 Proto Jukunoid **-kāt (ri-, a-)* ‘axe’; PB3 **kèt* ‘cut’, regional *ˀkāt* ‘cut’ (E, J, R). Baa *kāt* ‘cut’

kẹ̌-rá ‘tuo, mush’ (DTSB)

*LH, **kèNCV*
 PB3 **-kímà* ‘mush, polenta’ (cl 3/4, 7, 9), **kín.d* ‘pound, press down, ram in’; Proto Jukun-Mbembe **kin (-a, -i)* ‘beer’, **kiT (-i)* ‘mashed food’

kụ̃̃ / *kụ̃̃-sâ* ‘calabash, dish for liquids’, *kwẹ̌̃* / *ám kwạ̃̃* ‘calabash, dish for solid food’ (DTSA)

**kóNCi*
 PB3 **kómb* ‘scrape; dig; lick (food) with finger’, DER *ˀkómbè* ‘cup, hollow vessel’ (cl 7/8; E, G, J, L, M, S), ‘spoon’ (cl 7/8; G, M, N, P, S), *ˀkómbò* ‘drinking calabash’ (cl 11; L, M)

kọ̃̃-rā ‘old one’

**kòNCV*
 PB3 **kònd.am* ‘be bent’, **kònd* ‘prune; fell (a tree)’.
 Semantically, compare PB3 **kòt* ‘stoop, be bent’ with a derived meaning ‘be old’.



bùktù '(v) harrow'

PB3 **búg* 'break, snap', **bùg.ud* '(v) open'

bèbè '(v) disrespect'

PB3 **bû* 'bad; badness' (cl 14), DER **bû.b* ~ **bû.p* 'be bad', **bû.pi* 'do wrong, evil', REF **bíb* 'be bad'

bà: 'scoop (out)'

PB3 **bák* 'get, catch, rob'

bōŋbōŋ 'intelligent, mentally sound'

PB3 **jòngó* 'brain' (cl 14) with VAR **b.òngó* (A B G L M N P), fused with cl 14 prefix *bù-*.

pāblīb-ó ~ *pā(6)pāblīb-ó*
 'butterfly'

PB3 **pàp* 'flap (wings); flutter'

dā(:)^H ~ *dá:* ~ *dâ:^H* 'in', *dâ:-rá* 'inside; verandah'

PB3 **dágò* 'house'

sā: 'scarification'

PB **cád* '(v) incise, cut, tattoo'

sá:.má 'facial hair' (DTS^B)

*LH

PB3 **cák.ud* 'comb', DER **cakad* 'be ruffled', **càká* 'thicket; bush country' (N 5/6, (7/8), (11/10)), *°càkò* 'hair' (N 3) (J M).

sóm.mâ 'urine'

Nizaa (Mambiloid) *cūŋ* 'urinate', *cūŋ* 'urine'; Gimme (Samba-Duru) *sōŋ-mē* 'urine'

PB3 **cù* 'urine' (cl (4),6), **cù.b* 'urinate'

mb(ē)rǎ:(m) 'water'

**mà-bìdǎ:ŋ* *mà*

PB **bídá* 'pit; grave' (N 5/6); Ngwo (Ring Grassfields) *ē-blá ndīm* 'water hole'; Tuki (A60) *ì ≠ tètè^mbàrè* 'waterhole'; Ekajuk (Ekoid) *ēl-bīāŋ* 'hole, pit'; Mbat (Jarawan) *bèlǎ:ŋ* 'water'

sē-rà 'sand' (DTS^B)

*HL, **Z* < ***ŋ-s*, *CeNCV

PB3 **cèngà* (N (3), 5, (9), 11) 'sand; sandy ground', **céké* 'sand; grains; dregs; chaff'.

gès-ò / gès-à 'quiver'

4 words of morphological class *-o / -a* of which 3 end in *-s-o / -s-a* and refer to containers: *wísó* 'ceramic vessel containing the spirit of deceased male ancestors', *gèsò* 'quiver', *bìsò* 'pimple'

PB3 **gúi* 'arrow'; Pana *gō* 'arrow'

*[arrow-container] = [**GN**]



kú:-rá ~ kúd-dǎ / kúd-tá
 ‘rope’ (DTS^B)

*LH, *k

PB3 **gòdí* ‘string’ (cl 3/4, 5/6, 9/10, 11/10), regional **kudɪ* ‘string’ (cl 3/4, zones HL), and complications with the voicing of C1 elsewhere in Bantoid

kō:- / kwá:- ‘lion’

*L, *k

PB3 **-gòĩ* (and REF **-gò*, **-gùè*) ‘leopard, cheetah’ (cl 9/10, sometimes 1a/2), **kòpí* ‘feline: leopard, lion’ (NW SW Ce) (cl 9/10), **kócĩ* ‘lion’ (cl 9/10 in zones B C H L R)

kóbó.ró ‘break by
 twisting’

*LH, *k

PB3 **gòb* ‘bend; crook’, DER **gòb.ɪk* ‘hook, bend’, **gòb-é*, **gòb-è*, **gòb-ò* ‘hook’, **gòb-a* ‘hook, crook’, VAR **kòb* ‘hook up, bend’ (LMN), **kòb.ɪk* ‘hook up’ (GHLMS), **kòb.am* ‘be bent, be hooked up’ (HKLMN), **kòb-é* ‘box’ (ABCH), **kòb.ud* ‘unhook’ (LM), **kòb.ɪk* ‘be unhooked’ (LS).

- **CVNVCV** stems (usually: CVCV vs. construct form CVN) in modern BY **appeared late**
- Modern CVNVCV stems are historically **morphologically complex**, viz. **CVN(V)-CV** and the integration of the final CV morpheme happened after CVNVCV > C \tilde{V} : change ceased to be active
- The words with stem-internal NC clusters are likely to contain **frozen class markers** or be **compounds**, such as *bìndō* ‘granary’