RESULTS OF THE FIRST ADAGRAM SURVEY IN ADAMAWA AND TARABA STATES, NIGERIA

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http://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/
short for: Exploring Nigeria’s linguistic wealth: grammatical analysis and linguistic documentation of the Adamawa languages

four year research project (2016-2019)

funded by the City of Paris (program “Emergence(s)”) 

new team: 2 CNRS researchers, four PhD students, one undergraduate student
Dmitry Idiatov (PI), Mark Van de Velde, Mirjam Möller, Jakob Lesage, Eveling Villa, Lora Litvinova, Tope Olagunju
Why we came to Nigeria...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state of documentation</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>New Guinea Area</th>
<th>World</th>
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<td>unknown</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(the statistics are courtesy of Harald Hammarström)
• The Adamawa languages of Nigeria: only 3 languages out of 43 (= 7%) have a grammar
• Adamawa languages are not an established family
Traditional “Adamawa”:

- **Bena-Yungur** [ɓə́ːnáː] (& Bena-Mboi group): Dmitry Idiatov & Mark Van de Velde
- **Baa** [bàː] (aka Kwa): Mirjam Möller
- **Sam** [sàm] (aka Kpasham): Eveling Villa
- **Wam** [w̃äm] (aka Kugama): Lora Litvinova
- **Wom** [w̃ɔm] (aka Kam): Jakob Lesage

Not “Adamawa”:

- **Fam** [fãːm]: Tope Olagunju
- **Lau** [làw]: Dmitry Idiatov & Mark Van de Velde
- **Laka (of Lau)** [làkà]: Dmitry Idiatov & Mark Van de Velde
• First initiative in AdaGram: a survey mission in July-August 2016

• Team:

Tope Olagunju

Bitrus Andrew

• Duration: 25 days in total, 5 villages, 5 languages
• **General goal:** gather basic lexical and grammatical data for a number of languages of the region about which almost nothing is known

• Find consultants, practical information and basic linguistic data for the **Wom** (Kam) and **Sam** (Kpasham) projects

• Gather basic lexical and grammatical data on two additional languages of which the genealogical classification is particularly doubtful: **Laka of Lau** and **Fam**
ADAGRAM SURVEY: METHODS

• Detailed instructions on the data to collect, workflow, recording, metadata, itinerary

• Basic sociolinguistic data on the language, contacts, pictures, GPS

• A lexical questionnaire in English and Hausa: 600 words (only the first 500 done)

• A grammatical questionnaire in English: 143 phrases/sentences to translate and some additional questions

• Audio recordings:
  - work in batches: writing everything down first, then record
  - record basic metadata about the recording in the recording itself
  - 2 repetitions in isolation, 2 repetitions in a frame
  - PL for nouns, IMP & PFV for verbs, etc.
  - equipment…

• Work with a group of speakers (but do the recordings with one person)
ADAGRAM SURVEY: ITINERARY

- Kpasham: July 23-31
- Lau (with the Laka Lau): July 31 - August 5
- Lau (with the Win Lau): August 5
- Mayo Kam: August 5-9
- Sabon Gida Duna: August 9-17
This is KPASHAM
• What was available before:
  - wordlist ca. 350 words with audio


  Blench, Roger. 2009 (ms). *The Maya [Yendang] languages*. URL:
  http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/AU/Yandang%20group/
What became available after:

- wordlist ca. 500 words with audio
- ca. 140 phrases with audio
- established contacts with the community
- Eveling Villa is now working on the grammar and documentation of Sam for her PhD
Two communities in Lau:

- **Laka ward** of Lau
  (Hausa: *Angawan Lakawa*; formerly *Garin Lakawa* ‘Laka town’)

- **Lau** proper
What was available **before**:

- The **name** of the language: **Laka, Lau, Laka of Lau, Lau Habe**. It is mentioned as an Adamawa language of the Mbum group on the basis of its name alone in:


278. Laka
2. A Lau, Lao Habe
3. Taraba State, Karim Lamido LGA, at Lau; Yola LGA; and mainly in Cameroon
4. 460 (1952); 500 (1973 SIL)
5. Adamawa–Ubangi: Adamawa: Mbum group
Source: Glottolog.org
Laka of Lau is the **Sara language Laka (Laga)** (Central Sudanic, SBB, Western SBB, Sara, Central Sara), the **only Central Sudanic language of Nigeria (!)**
The list of “varieties” of Laka and some Central Sara languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laka “varieties”</th>
<th>Central Sara Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[kābá]</td>
<td>Kaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[làkà]</td>
<td>Laka / Laga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋgàmbáj]</td>
<td>Ngambay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[sàrà]</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[mbájdòbà]</td>
<td>Mbay Doba = Mango [mge]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laka (Lau)</td>
<td>Laka (Chad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animal</td>
<td>dā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow</td>
<td>màŋgî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chicken</td>
<td>kũṇḍzá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>dʒîŋgàw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medicine</td>
<td>kũmā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• In Hausa, the inhabitants are called *Lau haabe* ‘the indigenous of Lau’ (from Fula *haabe* ‘black servants, slaves, blacks (non-Fulani)’)

• In the language itself, the town is Lau *[làw]* (lit. ‘mud’) and the inhabitants are *[w̃ī làw]* ‘people of Lau’ and the language is *[w̃ī làw mā]* ‘the language of the people of Lau’
Shimizu (1980:42) based on observations by Meek (1931:35) classifies the language of Lau as Jukunoid together with Bandawa, Minda and a number of other groups (but provides no data).

The people of Lau (and the surrounding towns of Bandawa, Kwinini, Minda, etc.), though located within twenty-five miles of Kona, do not speak Jukun as their mother tongue. Their language is of a primitive monosyllabic type, but the vocabulary shows a number of resemblances to Jukun, and their close association with the Jukun is evident from the number of religious cults which they share with the Jukun of Kona. The same remarks apply to the riverain Jen, who, like the Jukun, worship Ma as the
• The Lau people consulted claimed to speak mutually intelligible languages with the inhabitants of Kunini, Bandawa and Jeshi.

• Lau is probably Jukunoid, indeed.

• We later collected additional data with a speaker of Lau in Ilorin (Kwara State) that we still need to process.
What was available **before**:

- wordlist ca. 150 words and some phrases

Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. 2015. (ms). *Some notes on Nyinom (aka Nyingwom or Kam)*. URL: https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-adamawa/files/2015/07/Kam-Nyingwom-notes.pdf
What became available after:

- wordlist ca. 500 words with audio
- ca. 140 phrases with audio
- established contacts with the community
- Jakob Lesage is now working on the grammar and documentation of Wom for his PhD
• What was available **before**:

  - wordlist ca. 70 words
  
  - a provisional classification of the language as **Mambiloid**.

  Blench, Roger. 2011 (ms). *Fam wordlist and etymological commentary*.

SABON GIDA DUNA: FAM
What become available after:

- wordlist ca. 700 words with audio
- ca. 140 phrases with audio
- list of the villages where Fam is spoken (it is not a single-village language as we used to think)
- better understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Fam
- established contacts with the community
- somewhat more certain about the classification of Fam as Mambiloid
- Tope has written his BA term paper on the basic description of Fam