

# Classification of Guébie within Kru

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## 1 Introduction

- **Problems:**

- Guébie is currently classified twice (Lewis et al., 2013)
  1. As a dialect of Bété-Gagnoa
  2. As another name for Dida-Lakota
- Neither of the current classifications is accurate based on data collected from a native speaker since September 2013.<sup>1</sup>

- **Goals:**

- To show that Guébie is more closely related to Vata and other Dida languages than to Gbadi and other Bété languages.
- To show that Guébie is not synonymous with Dida-Lakota

### Roadmap

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- § 1 Introduction
- § 2 Background: The current classification of Guébie
- § 3 Methodology
- § 4 Phonetic and phonological evidence
- § 5 Syntactic evidence
- § 6 Implications and Conclusions

## 2 Background: The current classification of Guébie

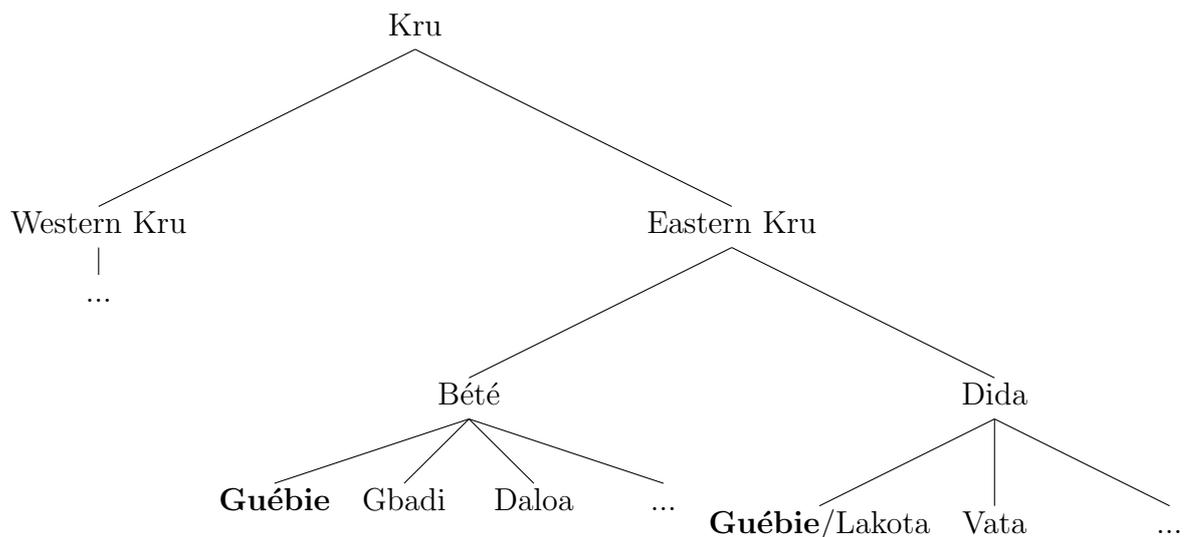
- Kru is a branch of Niger-Congo (cf. Marchese-Zogbo (2012) spoken in Liberia and southwest Côte d'Ivoire.
- There are two major branches of Kru languages, Eastern and Western.
- Bété-Guébie is an undescribed Eastern Kru language spoken in three small villages in southwest Côte d'Ivoire, just south of Gagnoa.
- The data presented here comes from original work with a native speaker of Guébie.

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<sup>1</sup>Further elicitation will be carried out with a larger number of Guébie speakers during Summer 2014.

- **Classification**

- As far as I know, there is no published documentation or description of Guébie.
- Due to geographic, historical, and possibly ethnic reasons, Guébie has been called a dialect of Bété-Gagnoa, spoken by about 150,000 people (Lewis et al., 2013).
- Due to linguistic similarity, Guébie is also listed as a second name for Dida-Lakota, an Eastern Kru language spoken to the east of Gagnoa.



### 3 Methodology

- Accepted means of establishing genetic relationship among languages: The Comparative Method (Bloomfield 1933, and others).
  - Requirement: dictionaries or lists of lexical items in the languages in question.
  - Problem: Kru is too underdocumented for such resources to be available.
  - Available resources: Grammatical descriptions of some Kru languages and the lexical items contained in grammatical examples.
- Basing genetic relationship on syntactic correspondences is less widely accepted (Garrett (2012); Ringe and Eska (2014) and citations therein).
- However, lexical items are most likely to be borrowed heavily from neighboring languages, and morphosyntactic correspondences are more likely to be consistent or slowly undergo regular change (grammaticalization) over time.
  - Melchert (2013) on Proto-Anatolian
  - Hübschmann (1875) on Armenian
- In the following sections I compare the linguistic properties of Guébie with its two geographically closest documented neighbors:
  - Bété-Gbadi, a variety of Bété-Gagnoa (Eastern Kru) spoken just north of the Guébie speaking area (data from Zogbo (2005); Koopman (1984))

- Vata, a Dida language spoken east of the Guébie-speaking areas (data from Kaye (1982); Koopman (1984))<sup>2</sup>.
- I demonstrate that the linguistic properties of Guébie and Vata are too similar (and too distinct from those in Bété) to be due to chance.
- Words and sounds that correspond in Guébie and Bété must be due to borrowing, or were present in Proto-Eastern-Kru.
- The linguistic features compared in the following sections are ones described for each of the relevant Kru languages, namely, Bété-Gbadi, Vata (Dida), and Guébie.
- Any assumptions about the features of Proto-Kru come from Marchese (1979); Marchese Zogbo (2012)

## 4 Phonetic and phonological evidence

### • Marginal tonal evidence

- There are four contrastive tonal heights in Guébie.
  - \* There are four contrastive tonal heights in Dida-Lakota.
  - \* It is controversial whether there are three or four contrastive tonal heights in Bété-Gbadi.
- The four tonal heights posited for Proto-Kru (Marchese-Zogbo 2012) have collapsed into three in Bété (cf. Marchese 1979, 1989).
- Tones here are marked with numbers 1-4, where 4 is the highest tone and 1 is the lowest. A period between tones separates syllables, and two numbers within a syllable signify a contour tone.

#### (1) Four contrastive tone heights in Guébie

a.	ko <sup>1</sup>	‘line/row’	ko <sup>2</sup>	‘pestle’	ko <sup>3</sup>	‘skin’	ko <sup>4</sup>	‘cadavre’
b.			no <sup>2</sup>	‘beverage’			no <sup>4</sup>	‘woman’
c.	dʒe <sup>1</sup>	‘egg’			dʒe <sup>3</sup>	‘star’	dʒe <sup>4</sup>	‘number’

#### (2) Contour examples

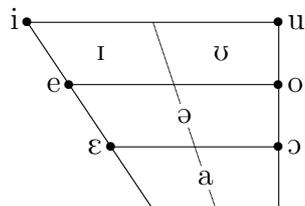
- dʒa<sup>31</sup> ‘coconuts’
- vɔ<sup>13</sup> ‘horns’
- su<sup>2</sup> ‘tree’
- su<sup>13</sup> ‘to shove’

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<sup>2</sup>Ideally, data from Dida-Lakota would be used as a comparison rather than data from Vata; however there is very little written work on Dida-Lakota. While I am certain that it is a distinct language from Guébie, based on the little data available I posit that the two are quite closely related. In the absence of sufficient Dida-Lakota data, I use data from Vata, the geographically next-closest Dida language.

- **Vowels**

- There are ten contrastive vowels in Guébie, distinguished by height, backness, and ATR value:



- \* There are ten contrastive vowels in Dida-Lakota, the same as the Guébie vowel inventory in the chart above.
- \* There are only seven contrastive vowels in Bété-Gbadi. There is only an ATR distinction in high vowels.
- There are marginal nasal vowels [ẽ, õ, ã] in Guébie, likely due to contact with nearby Kwa or Mande languages, which have contrastive nasal vowel distinctions.
  - \* Nasal vowels are also marginally present in Gbadi, and in many of the same words that they are in Guébie: kpãẽ<sup>3.2</sup>
  - \* Both Guébie and Gbadi are in contact with neighboring Kwa languages which have contrastive nasal vowels.
  - \* Marchese Zogbo (2012) does not reconstruct nasal vowels in Eastern Kru.
  - \* **Proposal:** This similarity between Guébie and Gbadi is due to the fact that both languages separately borrowed words containing nasal vowels from the nearby Kwa languages.
- Both Guébie and Dida-Lakota have pervasive ATR harmony, while Bété-Gbadi does not (Koopman 1984).

(3) **Vowel harmony data**

<b>Guébie</b>	tʃi-ə <sup>3.1</sup>	‘to cause to learn’	jɛ-a <sup>3.2</sup>	‘to cause to dance’
<b>Vata</b>	sle-e <sup>2.3</sup>	‘the house’	gbʊ-ɔ <sup>2.3</sup>	‘the cause’
<b>Gbadi</b>	li-a <sup>2.2</sup>	‘to cause to eat’	jue-a <sup>4.4.2</sup>	‘the children’

- If Guébie is more closely related to Bété than to Dida languages, vowel harmony must have arisen separately in both Vata and Guébie, or it was lost relatively recently in Gbadi.
- If Guébie is more closely related to Dida, we can say that Proto-Dida but not Proto-Bété had vowel harmony. This way, vowel harmony would have only had to arise in one language, not in two, separately.

- **Consonants**

- There is too little lexical data available from documented Bété and Dida languages to show regular sound changes that led from a Proto-language to the currently spoken languages.

- **Summary:** Until further data is collected, the existing phonological data on these languages do not tell us much about their genetic relationship.

## 5 Syntactic evidence

- All three languages have S AUX O V alternating with SVO word order.
- There are numerous syntactic elements of Guébie that more closely resemble Dida-Lakota than Bété-Gbadi and other Bété varieties.
- **Aspect marking**
  - The two major aspectual distinctions in Guébie, imperfective and perfective, are distinguished by tone.
  - \* Vata (and Dida-Lakota (Kaye, 1982)) also marks imperfective and perfective aspect with tone.
  - \* Bété-Gbadi distinguishes imperfective from perfective aspect with auxiliary particles, and the verb surfaces finally..

### (4) Perfective vs Imperfective in Guébie

- a. ɔ<sup>3</sup> li<sup>2</sup> dʒa<sup>31</sup>  
 3.SG eat.IMPF coconuts  
 ‘He eats coconuts’
- b. ɔ<sup>3</sup> li<sup>3</sup> dʒa<sup>31</sup>  
 3.SG eat.PERF coconuts  
 ‘He ate coconuts (recently)’

### (5) Comparing aspect distinctions

Language	Perfective	Imperfective
Guébie	Tonal	Tonal
Vata	Tonal	Tonal
Gbadi	Particle	Particle

- **Causation**

- In all three languages causatives can be formed with a verbal suffix.
- In Guébie and Vata, but not Gbadi, there is a second means of causative formation:

### (6) Clausal causative in Guébie

kɔɡulɪŋɔ-wa<sup>4.2.2.2.3</sup> gba<sup>2</sup> ne<sup>4</sup> ju-wa<sup>4.4</sup> ɔ<sup>3</sup> li<sup>2</sup>  
 farmer-DEF speak and boy-DEF 3.SG eat.PERF  
 ‘The farmer is making the boy eat’

### (7) Clausal causative in Vata

n<sup>3</sup> gba<sup>2</sup> le<sup>3</sup> yɔ-ɔ<sup>3.3</sup> li<sup>2</sup>  
 I speak and boy-def eat  
 ‘I made the boy eat.’

- **Wh-questions**

- According to Koopman (1984:87), Wh-questions are formed in Gbadi with an initial Wh-word and a clause-medial questions marker, while in Vata they are formed with an initial Wh-word and a final question marker.

(8) **Wh-questions in Guébie**

- a.  $\mu\acute{o}kpa^{3.3}$   $touri^{1.1.3}$   $ji^3$   $l\acute{e}trr^{3.2}$   $k\acute{o}pa^{3.23}$   $na^3$   
 who Touri.NAME will letter send Q  
 ‘To whom will Touri send a letter?’
- b.  $b\acute{e}ba^{2.2}$   $touri^{1.1.3}$   $ji^3$   $d\acute{z}atfi^{2.2}$   $k\acute{o}pa^{3.23}$   $na^3$   
 what Touri.NAME will Djatchi.NAME send Q  
 ‘What will Touri send to Djatchi?’

(9) **Wh-questions in Vata**

$al\acute{o}^{1.4}$   $\acute{o}^1$   $le^2$   $saka^{3.4}$   $la^1$   
 who he eat rice WH  
 ‘Who eats rice?’

(10) **Comparing Wh-constructions**

Language	Initial	Medial	Final
Guébie	Wh	–	+Q
Vata	Wh	–	+Q
Gbadi	Wh	+Q	–

- **Gerunds**

- There is a parallel verbal nominativizing procdss (gerund formation) in Guébie and Vata. There is no gerund form in Gbadi (Koopman, 1984:47).

(11) **Gerunds in Guébie**

$saka^{3.3}$   $la^2$   $li-li-je^{2.2.1}$   
 rice GEN eat-eat-NOM  
 ‘Rice-eating’

(12) **Gerunds in Vata**

$saka^{3.4}$   $la^2$   $pi-li^{2.1}$   
 rice GEN eat-NOM  
 ‘Rice-preparing’

- **Summary**

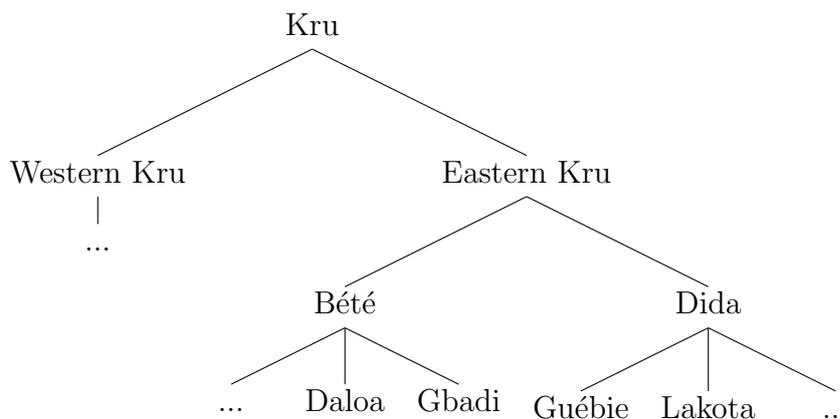
- We have seen that Guébie syntax is similar to Vata in aspect marking, causation, wh-question formation, and gerunds.
- The two have further syntactic properties in common not shown here for purposes of time: applicative formation, negation marking, long-distance wh-movement, etc.
- Gbadi either does not have these syntactic constructions or they surface distinctly from Guébie and Vata.

(13) **Summary table**

Feature	Bété	Dida	Guébie
# of tones	3	4	4
# of vowels	7	10	10
Aspect	particle	tone	tone
Clausal causation	–	yes	yes
Wh-question particle	medial	final	final
Gerunds	–	yes	yes

## 6 Implications and Conclusions

- We have seen evidence from the phonological and prosodic systems, and the morphophonology of Guébie, that it resembles Vata, a Dida language, more closely than Gbadi, a Bété language.
- Further research on Bété and Dida languages will allow for lexical comparison.
- **Conclusion:** Guébie should be classified as a Dida language, closely related to Vata and Dida-Lakota, but not synonymous with them.
- More data is needed to know more about the historical splits within Eastern Kru, but the evidence here shows that Guébie is more closely related to Dida than Bété.



- Finer grained classification will require further research. Work such as Kaye (1982), “Les dialects dida,” is a start toward this kind of comparative research in Kru.

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