

The nominal class system of Cerma

		Singular		Transnumeral	Plural			
Proto	Cer ma	Pron.	Suffix		Suffix	Pron.	Cer ma	Proto
1* <i>u</i> , * <i>a</i>	1	u	-ŋo -Ø, -V, -ùó, -yo	_____	-mba -bàá	ba	2	2* <i>ba</i>
5* <i>dɪ</i>	7	di	-(L)Le	_____	-ŋa	a	8	6* <i>ŋa</i>
15* <i>ku</i>	3	ku	-ŋgu	_____	-(n)ni	ni	4	10* <i>ni</i>
12* <i>ka</i>	5	ka	-ŋga	_____	-(m)mu	mu	6	22* <i>mu</i>
23* <i>ma</i>	9			ma -(m)ma				
21* <i>tv</i>	10			du -(L)Lu				
22* <i>mv</i>	(6)			(mu -(m)mu)				

The structure of fully specified nouns:

Regular nouns:	(Prefix-)	Root/Stem-	(-Extension-)	N	-Suffix	(=enclitic)
Irregular nouns:	---	Root/Stem-	---	--	(-Suffix)	(=enclitic)

Head-initial order with qualifiers:

Noun- (state of comp.) + adjective/participle/noun/extension + class marker

Noun- (state of comp.) + adjective- (association state) + demonstrative + class marker

(1) « Comme on ne constate aucune différence morphologique entre le verbe et le verbe d'état et la forme dérivée du verbe qui donne la base de l'adjectif (l'adjectif sans le suffixe d'accord), on appellera l'adjectif en nateni un *adjectif syntaxique*. C'est sa position syntaxique qui nous révèle son statut, et non sa morphologie. » (Nedellec, B. 2008 :149)

(2) “The only paper solely dedicated to adjectives in Buli so far (I am aware of) is Matushansky (2003) ... (she) denies on a rather meagre empirical basis the existence of a lexical category adjectives in Buli postulating that ‘meanings expressed by a special morpho-syntactic class of adjectives in English are expressed in Buli by nouns (when nominal modification is required) or by verbs (when property is predicated of an argument)’ (2003:125). ... I, however, disagree with her categorical rejection of any adjective class in Buli... We will see that Buli has even two minor and structurally fuzzy adjectival classes which cannot simply be classified as verb or noun.” Schwarz 2008:137.

(3) Characteristic features of primary adjectives:

- Open class on the lexical level
- Lexical tones
- Different singular and plural stems
- Nominalisation by suffixing *-ma*
- When serving as attributes suffixed by *-ma* / *-bàá*
- Use of a copula when used as predicates

(4) Plural formation of primary adjectives:

Full reduplication (only with final nasals):

-jòròŋ- / *-jòròn*+*jóróŋ-* ‘high, tall; great, large, big’

Reduplication with different kinds of reducing the final syllable

-gbàá- / *-gbà*+*gbáá-* ‘large, light’

-cêkúŋ-, *-cìèkúŋ-* / *-cêkŋ*+*cìèkúŋ-* ‘little, few, small’

-júgùrî- / *-júgùrí*+*jùgùrî-* ‘small, stunted, shrivelled’, cp. *-jùgùbìé-* ‘tufted, bushy, thick’

-bétèrîé- / *-bétè*+*bétè-* ‘short’ syn. *-gbàáyúù-*, *-gbútùrúù-*

Partial reduplication:

- jùdí- / -**jǔ**+júdí- ‘long, greater in length’
- càllí- / -**cà**+càllí- ‘pale, whitish’
- bìntùú- / -**bì**+bìntùú- ‘dark, gloomy, sombre’
- bùòlàá- / -**bò**+bùóláá- ‘large, corpulent’ (rarely used)

With lateral < > nasal alternation:

- gbàláá- / -**gbǎŋ**+gbàláá- ‘whitish’
- càgáá- / -**cǎn**+càgáá- ‘twisted’
- gòrúú- / -**gǒŋ**+gòrúú- ‘with a deformed head’

- (5) -**jàm**sàà- / -jàmàsà+**jám**ásáá- ‘large; big and strong’
- jànt**àá- / -jà+jàntàá- ‘large, gigantic’
- jàŋ**kàá- / -jà+jàŋkàá- ‘tall’, cp. -jàtàà- / -jà+jáátáá- ‘high, raised’

(6) -bûc / -bǔmbǔmbǎa ‘big, large, immense’ (attrib.)

(7) bói / bǔmbǔŋ ‘big, large, numerous, many, several’ (pred.), cp. bǔlbǔl ‘better, superior’ (ideoph.)

(8) Colour adjectives:

-pilV- ‘white’ (**conc.adj.**), cp. *pú* ‘to flower, to whiten’, *pùsǔŋ* ‘bec.white,’

pìláá / *pǐm*+*pìláá* ‘white’ (adj.pred.)
 -pùgúú- / -*pùm*+*pùgúú*- ‘whitish, rather grey’ (prim.adj.)
 -càllí- / -*cà*+*càllí*-, ‘pale, whitish’ (prim.adj.)
 syn. -càgáá- / -*cǎn*+*càgáá*-
pépépé ‘very white’ (ideoph.)

-bilV- ‘black’ (**conc.adj.**), cp. *bíŋ* ‘to become black’
 -kàú- / -*kà*+*kàú*- ‘black’ (prim.adj.)
kpàbìrìí / *kpàbìrì*+*kpábìrìí* ‘dark-skinned’ (adj.pred.)
kírkírkír ‘very black’ (ideoph.)

-dàá- / -*dà*+*dáá*- ‘red’ (prim.adj.), cp. *síél* ‘to become red, redden’
síésíésíé ‘very red’ (ideoph.)

(9) *po, *pon, *ped, *puđ ‘white’ (Manessy 1979:101)

Table 1

‘white’ - <i>pilV</i> - conc.adj.	‘black’ - <i>kàú</i> - prim.adj.	‘very black’ - <i>kírkírkír</i> ideoph.	‘red’ - <i>dàá</i> - prim.adj.
moon	green grass	hair	the rising sun
water	green leaves	charcoal	the setting sun
butter	green mangues	the dark skin of Africans	ripe mango
egg	charcoal	darkness	millet bier
sheep	African people		blood
teeth	fertile soil		goat
cotton	tyre		baby
cloud			white people
a variety of maize			a variety of maize
			tongue
			albinos

- (10) *cìèṅó díí cěllé* ‘La femme a un teint claire’
dúnḡú dìì cěrré ‘La maison est claire’ (il a assez de lumière)
sùóṅú dìì cěrré ‘Le champ est clair’ (il n’y a pas des arbres)

(11) Characteristic features of the concordant adjectives

- Closed class on the lexical level
- No lexical tone with most of the items
- Derived from stative/inchoative verbal stems by means of reduplication or by suffixing the derivative morpheme -(L)V (some origins remain unclear)
- Nominalisation by suffixing of the class markers of cl. 3 *-ṅgu* or of cl.9 *-ma*; categorical transfer to nouns by the bilateral marking: class pronouns + stem + suffix
- When used as attributes, they take the class marker of their head noun (lengthening or diphthongisation of their final stem vowels before some class markers)
- Different options of formation in predicate function.

Table 2 Toneless concordant adjectives

Adjective	Gloss	Predicates	Nominalised participles, lexicalised derivations
-bṅV- (-bṅa(a)-, -bṅei-)	‘humid, raw, fresh’ < ?	copula + participle	<i>kúú-bṅáá-ṅú</i> <i>bṅàà-ṅù</i> ‘early in the morning’
-cṵV- (-cṵṵ-, -cṵa(a)- -cṵei-)	‘old, used’ cp. <i>cṵ</i> ‘to continue, to remain, to spend the night’; <i>cṵlṅnù</i> ‘to become old, to age’	PF copula + participle	<i>kúú-cṵláá-ṅú</i> <i>cṵlàà-ṅú</i> ‘long time’ <i>ḡn-cṵlṵ-mmá</i> ‘history’ <i>máá-cṵlṵ-mmá</i> ‘old case’
-dṵṵV-	‘good’ cp. <i>dṵl</i> ‘become good, sweet’	PF copula + participle	<i>kúú-dṵṵl-ṅú</i> <i>dṵṵlú-ṅú</i> ‘harmony, love, pleasure’ <i>dṵṵl-má</i> ‘pleasusre, good taste, harmony’

Table 3 Concordant adjectives of the tonal pattern H.L:

Adjective	Gloss	Predicates	Nominal part., lexical derivation
-bílV- (-bílò-, -bíl(ì)ì-, -bíl-)	‘black’ cp. <i>bìl</i> ‘to become black, to blacken’	PF copula + participle	<i>kúú-bílì-ṅù</i> <i>úú-bílò-ḡò</i> ‘African’
-cḡV- (-cḡ(ì)ḡ-, -cḡ(à)à-, -cḡḡ-)	‘used’ < ?	copula + participle	<i>kúú-cḡḡ-ṅú</i> <i>mún-cḡḡ-mmú</i> <i>cḡḡ-ḡó</i> ‘whore’, <i>cḡḡ-sḡḡnì</i> ‘indecenty, state of a spoilt child’
-kúV- (-kúlo-, -kú(i)e)	‘dead’ cp. <i>kú</i> ‘to die’	PF copula + participle	<i>kúú-kúlè-ṅù</i> <i>úú-kúlò-ḡò</i> ‘human corpse’, <i>kúlò-ḡò</i> / <i>kúò-mbà</i> ‘ancestor’, <i>bíkúlò-ḡò</i> / <i>bíkúò-mbà</i> ‘death, human corpse’

Table 4 Concordant adjectives of the tonal pattern L.H:

Adjective	Gloss	Predicates	Nom.part., lexical.der.
-bàbálV- (-bàbálá(á)- -bàbáléí-)	‘bad’ cp. <i>bàlǎŋ</i> ‘become bad’, <i>bàbàláá</i> adv. ‘bad’	PF copula + part.	<i>kúú-bàbáláá-ŋgú</i> <i>bàlàà-ŋgú</i> ‘mourning, wickedness’, <i>ám-bàbál(ám)-má</i> ‘evil’, <i>bíŋwó-bàl-ŋó</i> ‘wild animal’
-cècél-	‘light’ cp. <i>céliéŋ</i> ‘to light’, -cèllé-/cěncèllé- adj.pred., -cèrré-/cé + cèrrè- ‘clear, free space’ adj.pred.	prim.adj.	<i>kúú-cècél-ŋgú</i> <i>cècél-má</i> ‘fairness of skin’, <i>cécér-má</i> ‘light’
-hðhól- (-hɔhɔlaa-)	‘hot, warm’ cp. <i>hùól</i> ‘to heat’, <i>hǒlls</i> , <i>hòlólól</i> / <i>hǒŋhólls</i> adj.pred., <i>hǒlhǒl</i> ‘quick, rapid’ ideoph.	PF prim.adj. copula + part.	<i>kúú-hðhól-ŋgú</i> <i>hðhól-má</i> ‘heat, fig.: ‘illness’ <i>hǒlls</i> ‘illness’

(12) -hðhól- ‘hot, warm’

- ù kúò-mà *húóláa* ‘He has a temperature’ (lit. ‘his flesh (body) has become hot’)
PS₁ meat-₉ to_heat:PF
- ù kúó-má *dìi máá-hðhól-má* ‘His body is hot’ (his nature, habitually)
PS₁ meat-₉ CP PR₉-hot-₉
- ù kúó-má *díi hðlhóllò* ‘He has a high fever’ (lit. ‘his flesh (body) is very hot’)
PS₁ meat-₉ CP hot

(13) Characteristic features of participles:

- open class on the lexical level
- lexical tones
- basing on dynamic verbs without any derivative morpheme
- categorical transfer to nouns by the bilateral marking ‘class pronouns + stem + suffix’

(14a) kòró sà púòná báá ù **négé-cô-ŋgà**.

monkey- NEG to_play with PS₁ branch-to_spend_the_night-₅

The monkey does not play with the branch on which he spends the night. Prov/12 (< *négè-ŋgà* ‘branch’ + *có* ‘to spend the night’, NV *cô-mmà*), cp. the noun phrase with the adjective of the same origin: *sébé-còlò-ŋò* ‘old book)

(14b) báá jí tá kà **né-máá-lé=ŋ** bà síéí=ná híéré.

NR₂ VEN to_leave to_go village-far_away-₇=LOC PR₂ three=LOC all

[One day] all three left to go to a village far away. 1-1/4 (< *né-llé* ‘village’ + *máá* ‘to be far away’, VN *máá-má*)

(15) Nominalised participles

- máá-cê-mmà* ‘work’ < *cé* ‘to do, make’ VN *cê-mmà*
kúú-dô-ŋgù ‘sth that bites’ < *dõŋ* ‘to bite’ VN *dô-mmà*
kúú-gállá-ŋgú ‘bed’ (sth to lie down on,) < *gállà* ‘to lie down, lay down’ VN *gállá-mmá*
mún-gállá-mmú ‘sort of bed (couch)’ (place where one can lie down) < *gállà* ‘to lie down’

(16) Characteristic features of ideophones:

- Lexical tones
- At least two reduplicated syllables (in contrast to adverbs)
- No different plural stems (in contrast to primary adjectives)

- Occur generally in predicates (with a copula)
- When used as attributes, they take the same number markers as primary adjectives (-*má*/-*bàá*)

Table 5 Ideophones

	Variants, synonyms, etymologies	Gloss
bélbél	<i>bélbélbél</i> cp. <i>bèlìéŋ</i> ‘to fatigue’	‘soft, weak’
cèlélélé	cp. <i>célìéŋ</i> ‘to light’ - <i>cècél-</i> conc.adj. ‘clear’ - <i>cèllé-</i> adj.pred. ‘fair-skinned’	‘fair-skinned’
dóndón	<i>dóndóndón</i>	‘solid’
fárfár	<i>fárfárfár</i> cp. <i>fàrà</i> ‘to lengthen, to extend’	‘far away’, ‘for a long time’, ‘often’
hǒlhǒl	<i>hǒlhǒlhǒl</i> cp. - <i>hòhól-</i> ‘warm’ conc.adj. <i>hùól</i> ‘to heat’	‘quick, rapid’

(17) Grades of intensity

‘white’

pépépé (ideoph.) > *pìláá* (adj.pred.) > -*càgáá-* (prim.adj.) > -*pùgúú-* (prim.adj.)

‘black’

kírkírkír (ideoph.) > *kpàbìrìí* (adj.pred.) > -*kùllú-* (prim.adj.) > -*kàú-* (prim.adj.)

‘red’

síésíésíé (ideoph.) > *dàá* (prim.adj.).

(17a) Ideophones as predicates

ùú **díí hǒlhǒl.**

SJ₁ CP ID:rapid

He is quick.

hú-mmá **díí légélégé.**

water-₉ CP ID:clear, limpid

The water is clear.

(17b) Ideophones used as adverbs

ù cíé mì mààcécé-mmá = í **pàlǎmpàlǎŋ.**

SJ₁ to_do:PF PS₁ work-₉=DEF ID

He has sabotaged my work. (ID indicates sabotage)

bà táá kú yáà = í, **fárfárfár**, ká kà jáál káà-ŋgù = í.

SJ₂ to_leave:PF SJ₃ FOC=DE ID:far_away to_go AL to_cross_water marigot-₃=DEF
F L

And they set off and walked a long way until they came to a place where they could cross the marigot.
3-4/60

(17c) Ideophones used frequently with certain verbs

cíí ‘to fall down’

ù **cíí dá búrùŋ.**

SJ₁ to_fall_down:P CPL ID

F

He fell down (with) *búrùŋ*. (ID evokes the noise of falling down)

pígááj ‘to show’

bín-cóí-ŋ wúð : " bà **pígááj** = nì **jéjé** nín-só-ŋó".

old_man- QUO₁ SJ₂ to_show=OJ_{2SG} ID:correctly truth-₁

N

The old man said : “It’s true; they have told you the truth.” 3-5/96

píyè ‘speak’

ù **píyè dá bílbílbí.**

SJ₁ speak CPL ID

He speaks with enthusiasm. (ID evokes enthusiasm)

(18) Nouns

Head-final order of nominal compounds:

híèŋ + váá-ŋó ‘jackal’ < *híè-ŋgù* ‘bush’ + *váá-ŋó* dog’

Head-initial order with nouns:

yér + jú-ŋó ‘female goat’ < *yé-ŋó* ‘goat’ + *jú-ŋó* ‘mother’

gbèi + jú-ŋó ‘capital’ < *gbèi-ŋá* ‘money’ + *jú-ŋó* ‘mother’

ísú + hòl-lè ‘minuit’ < *ísú-ŋgù* ‘night’ + *hól-lé* ‘liver’ fig. ‘center’

híé + hòl-lè ‘pleine brousse’ < *híè-ŋgù* ‘bush’ + *hól-lé* ‘liver’

dú + mé-llé ‘cour, entrée’ < *dú-ŋgù* ‘maison’ + *mé-llé* ‘nose’, fig. ‘bout’

dáá + mè-llé ‘bâtonnet, rameau’ < *dáá-ŋgù* ‘bois’ + *mé-llé* ‘nez’

Defective nouns :

tíbi + bè-llé ‘fruit’ < *tíbi-ŋgù* ‘tree’

kó + bé-llé ‘iron wire’ < *kó-llú* ‘iron’

tí + bè-llé ‘comprimé’ < *tí-ŋgù* ‘remède’

cèr + bè-llé ‘cerma pur’ < *cèr-má*

(19) Nominal extensions

u/ba (1/2) kùò-lò-ŋó / kòè-mbá ‘chicken’; cp. *kùò-nà-ŋó* ‘hen’

-lo-/-lie- jéí-ló-ŋó / jéí-líé-mbá ‘sickly person’; cp. *jeí-ŋó* / *jaá-mbá* ‘sick person’

ku/ni (7/8) bál-yù-ŋgù / bál-yù-nnì ‘small bull’ < *bálàà-ŋó* / *bál-mbá* ‘bull’

-yu- náàr-yú-ŋgù / náàr-yú-nnì ‘small rifle’ < *naárù-ŋgù* / *naár-ní* ‘rifle’

di/a (3/4) màà-yè-llé / màà-yè-ŋá ‘small axe’ < *màà-lé* / *mèi-ŋá* ‘axe’

-ye-/-yie- bíti-yè-llé / bíti-yè-ŋá ‘small pot’ < *bitùò-ŋgù* / *bitò-nnì* ‘pot’

(20) Primary adjectives as attributes

(20a) ù wúyáá **dánsú-gbègégé-mmà.**

SJ₁ to_eat:PF sauce-bitter-sfx₉

He has eaten the bitter sauce. < *dánsú-ŋgù* + *-gbègégé-*

(20b) **jú-pánná=í** káásààŋ bítúó-ŋgù=í.

tô-solid=FOC to_pierce:IPF pot-₃=DEF

Stiff *tô* (porridge) makes a hole in the water pot. (If two people argue and both refuse to change their mind, that’s the end of their friendship.) Prov/84 < *júú-rú* + *pánná*

(20c) ù wúyáá **dánsú-gbègégè nà-ŋgù.**

SJ₁ manger:PF sauce-amer IND-₃

He has eaten a certain bitter sauce. < *dánsú-ŋgù* + *-gbègégé-*

(20d) *cíé-bùs* / *cíé-bò-bàá* ‘big calebasse’ < *cíi-ŋgà* ‘small calebasse’

dù^m-bùs / *dù^m-bò-bàá* ‘cobra’ (serpent cracheur) < ?

(20e) *nél-bùò* / *nél-bòmbò-mbàá* ‘great person’ *nél-ŋó* < ‘person’

dú-bùò / *dú-bòmbò-mbàá* ‘big house’ < *dú-ŋgù* ‘house’

(21) Concordant adjectives

(21a) ná táárà bímbí-píél-ní wàà bímbí-kàkàú-bàá ? níí-píél-ní.

SJ_{2PL} want thing-white-4 CJ:ou thing-black-sfx₂ PR₄-white-4

Do you want white or black clothes (things)? The white ones. F101 < bíńkú-ńgú / bímbí-ńńí + -pílV-; -kàú- / -kàkàú -

(21b) bà háá = yò ínàngò-fífi-ńó.

SJ₂ give:PF=OJ₁ granary-complete-1

They gave him a complete granary. < ínàng-ńó + -fífi- (the state of composition of irr. nouns is identical to the plural stem ínàngò-bàá)

(21c) hǒlló-bàbálá-ń dáá-yò bílálá m̀ tó = í.

illness-bad-N DEM-PR₁ to_entrapp:PF PS_{1SG} father=DEF

This bad illness caught my father. < hǒllò + -bàbálV-

(22) Range of semantic interpretations:

<i>ńél-híná-ńó</i>	'slow man'
<i>hú-ńhíná-ńó</i>	'cool water'
<i>dú-híná-ńgú</i>	'damp house'
<i>júu-híná-ńdú</i>	'cold meal'
<i>tér-híná-ńgú</i>	'a damp place'
<i>híé-hìnàà-ńgù</i>	'green grass'

(23) Some lexicalisations :

<i>sò-còlàà-ńgú</i>	'fallow (land)'	< sùò-ńgú 'field' + -còLV- 'old'
<i>fíé-bíná-ńdú</i>	'fresh leaf'	< fíé-lú 'leaf' + -bína- 'humid'
<i>ńá-mpílá-ńó</i>	'shea butter'	< ńá-mmá 'oil' + -pílV- 'white'
<i>bààn-sénè-ńgú</i>	'rising sun' (morning sun from 7 to 8 a.m.)	< bàà-ńgú 'sun' + -sénè- 'young'

Abbreviations

2PL	Second person plural	N	Prefinal nominal marker N, part of the nominal class marker
2SG	Second person singular	NEG	Negational marker
CJ	Conjunction	NR	Narrative pronoun
CP	Copula	OJ	Object pronoun
CPL	complementiser	PF	Perfective verb stem
DEF	Definite marker	PS	Possessive pronoun
DEM	Demonstrative	QUO	Quotative
FOC	Focus marker	SJ	Subject
IPF	Imperfective verb stem	VN	Verbal noun
LOC	Locative marker		

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Appendix:

Pascal Boyeldieu (CNRS) & Gudrun Mieke (University of Bayreuth), 'How do African languages express qualification?' (2006) ms

Introduction

As many authors point out, the problem of the semantic and syntactic domain of 'qualification' is one of the most difficult to treat, both internally (when dealing with the description of a particular language) and cross-linguistically (from a typological point of view).¹ There are, apparently, several reasons for this fact.

On the one hand, there is considerable variation among languages concerning the field covered by 'adjectives', understood as the word class most appropriate for expressing 'properties of entities'.² Some languages have a wide/open range of adjectives, some of them have a limited/closed set, some of them have none. In this respect adjectives contrast both with nouns and verbs, which exhibit more consistency from one language to another as prototypical grammatical devices for expressing the conceptual or cognitive categories of 'entities' (or 'classes') and 'events' (or 'processes') respectively. Stassen (1997: 16-17 – following Givón 1984) views the latter as ends of a *Time Stability Scale* on which 'properties', whose unity as a clear-cut semantic category is questionable, occupy non-focal, intermediate positions. Even within one language (e.g. Bambara) there can be variation, in the sense that all speakers may not agree on the exact extent of the adjectival class. Also diachronically, adjectives seem to be a rather instable class when one considers the strong variation they may exhibit among closely related languages (e.g. Gur, Bongo-Bagirmi).

Another difficulty arises, especially in a cross-linguistic view, from the fact that scholars do not necessarily agree, for a given language, on the label 'adjective'. Here we may again cite Bambara, where Creissels and Tröbs call *stative verbs* what Dumestre calls *adjectives* (see 1.2. below). In the same sense Dixon (2004) argues that one should consider as *adjectives* what scholars view as *verbs* (possibly with some syntactic restrictions or variants) in many languages. In fact 'adjectives' – or, to use Creissels' words (2003: 20), *lexemes with adjectival calling* – may exhibit strong affinities either with verbs or nouns, which sometimes make their identification tricky and subject to discussion. Irrespective of a precise morpho-syntactic and semantic description of the word classes involved, the labelling of the words referring to 'properties' in individual languages also partially depends on grammatical traditions and/or personal preferences of the describer (see for instance Boyd [n.d.] on Chamba-Daka and Zande).

Lastly the linguistic devices of qualification appear to be rather poorly documented in many monographs concerning little known languages. This gap may be the result of methodological approaches which are (were) weak on that particular point. But this probably can also be explained by the fact that instances of qualification are rather infrequent in discourse (as illustrated by spontaneous texts) and that a thorough study of qualification usually requires a specific inquiry, mainly using solicited questions.

Before going into details concerning some salient aspects of qualification (word classes, morphology, semantics, see other parts of this volume), it therefore seems necessary to give an overview of the main morphosyntactic devices used by languages for expressing 'properties' in the two functional contexts of *predication* and *noun modification*. In doing this our aims are the following:

- to give an account of the research being collectively carried on within the frame of the German/French collaborative projects "Eigenschaftskonzepte in westafrikanischen Sprachen" and "Typologie des adjectifs et de la qualification dans les langues africaines";
- to mark out the morpho-syntactic domains of qualifiers in the languages under consideration;
- to reveal preferences, incompatibilities and/or correlations between certain types of device;
- to draft a framework for systematic inquiry as a basis for future research, with special respect to the description of individual languages.

¹ See notably, for the case of African languages, *Linguistique africaine* (1997) and Creissels (2003).

² But not necessarily restricted to that function: Hagège (1974) distinguishes, in French, between 'purely qualificative adjectives' and 'relational adjectives', the latter (e.g. *l'influx nerveux, l'autorité paternelle*) assuming in fact a 'genitive' function (which may have both a 'possessive' as well as a relational meaning). Similar cases are illustrated by the 'possessive' adjectives of Slavic languages (e.g. Czech *Petrova kniha*: Petr's book, the book of Petr).

The conceptual domain of ‘qualification’ and ‘properties’

Qualification is understood here as the assignment of a ‘property’³ to an ‘entity’, whether expressed in terms of a predicate or in terms of a modifier of an argument. ‘Properties’ in our sense means primarily and typically features or attributes of entities (objects and living beings) that are mainly perceptible through the senses.

There are at least two ways of approaching this conceptual domain. The first one is rather general and exemplified by the way Stassen (1997: 16-18) characterizes “property-concept predicates”. Despite his reticence to view them as a “universal, homogeneous, cognitive category”, the author suggests the common following features: they are a) intermediately time-stable, b) non-volitional, and c) not referring to kinds. Which means in short that a) they stand halfway between ‘events’ and ‘classes’, b) they are to be distinguished from ‘states’ and c) from ‘class-membership’. The second approach, which is of a more cumulative nature, is exemplified by the semantic types of Dixon (2004: 3-5), starting from ‘dimension’, ‘age’, and ‘value’, up to ‘quantification’, ‘position’, and ‘cardinal numbers’.

The word class ‘adjective’ and its implications

The number of word classes that are involved in strategies to express properties, as well as the degree of their involvement in the respective formation processes, differs from language to language. This depends heavily on the given inventory of word classes, in particular on the existence of a “morphosyntactically identifiable word class of adjectives” (Sasse 1993: 661), which according to this author, “[...] prototypically serves the attribution of properties to individuals”.

In our project, we have narrowed down the more general definition of ‘adjectives’ given by Sasse by separating (within this word class) what we call ‘primary’ adjectives from derived ones. The former are defined by the following parameters:

1. they function as attribute (modifier) to a referent;
2. they cannot be conjugated (in opposition to verbs);
3. they cannot function as predicate without syntactical support (copula, etc.);⁴
4. they cannot function as head of a phrase (in opposition to nouns).

In addition, Sasse (1993: 661) notes that: “The presence of adjectives in a language presupposes a fairly high degree of N[oun]-V[erb] distinction because it implies the formation of noun phrases.”

It is because of its syntactically double function of qualification (‘attribution’) – modifying referents as well as predicating the properties of referents – that problems of delimiting or defining the word class ‘adjective’ are an innate feature that will never be solved at the typological level. The evidence from African languages nicely demonstrates the ineffectiveness of attempts to do so. Consequently, our contribution is aimed at the recording of strategies to express attribution in some of these languages and not at the problematic nature of word class definition, involving such questions as ‘are there adjectives in the language?’. However, bearing all this in mind, we will still use ‘adjective’ as a cover term in what follows.

The apparently janus-faced character of qualification (and its prototypical word class, the adjective) nevertheless permits us to figure out a few specifics:

- in some languages, the use of certain ‘adjectives’ as qualifiers is confined either to the predicate or to the argument position;
- attributes can never indicate autonomous reference.⁵

The second premise appears as a logical consequence of the frequently observed close (derivational) relationship between attributes and verbal bases.

What follows is a synthesis of the data provided by the members of our project. It should be noted that we do not consider the modification of predicates (often represented by a special word class commonly called ‘adverbs’), although in some languages the close relationship between adjectives and adverbs is clearly identifiable.

³ Note that ‘property’ is used here as an equivalent of ‘quality’, i.e. in a more restricted way than its logical meaning (D. Creissels, *pers. comm.*).

⁴ However, this criterion was contested during the Porquerolles workshop (October 2006).

⁵ Except the case they are really nominalized as independent nouns.

The corpus

The languages considered in this survey belong to three of the four language phyla of Africa: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger-Kordofanian. They also include two creoles, Cape Verdean and Palenquero.⁶ These languages represent the research fields of the members of the working groups from LLACAN (CNRS) and the University of Bayreuth (Afrikanistik I & II), who were permanently involved in the PICS programme on property concepts (see list of languages and contributors at the end of this contribution).

All the linguistic material presented by the German/French project members during the workshops held in Bayreuth, Paris, and Porquerolles between 2005 and 2006 served as the linguistic basis for this documentation. In particular, we have used the list of adjectives which was compiled when the programme started and which provided the general base for all comparative approaches within the framework of this project. Furthermore, this study is based on the project's typological questionnaire, as well as on the respective analyses of individual languages provided by the members.

Predication

Four main types of property predication can be observed in the data at hand, namely a) verbs (and/or predicative adjectives), b) 'copula' constructions in a wide sense (including different types of copulas and different types of attributes), c) 'have' constructions, and d) what we semantically summarize under 'experiencer constructions'...

Noun modification

As already shown with predication, not only more or less well-defined word classes are involved in strategies for expressing concepts of properties, but also syntactic constituents (like circumstantial phrases) or the semantically specified experiencer constructions. The same is true for (head) noun modification. Therefore in this section, besides the presentation of the respective word classes, syntactic and derivation devices used for noun modification in the languages under consideration are also discussed. ...

Conclusions

Although the languages at our disposal can hardly be considered as a balanced, representative sample of any consistent unit (language group, zone or type), they allow some generalizations that may be of interest in a cross-linguistic perspective, and will serve as conclusions to the present report. In any case, we hold that property concepts of a given language can adequately be captured only when both predication and noun modification are taken into consideration.

1. Two main word classes are usually involved in the expression of qualification, namely verbs and adjectives. As is to be expected,⁷ the two of them are clearly specialized in the roles of predication and noun modification respectively, even if verbs may also modify a noun (in relative clauses), and adjectives may predicate a 'property' (in 'copula'-constructions). Yet there are no 'quality' verbs in Hausa, nor adjectives in Afar and Wolof. Not surprisingly, these languages resort to the alternative strategies we have mentioned.

2. A few languages have a specific class of 'property' terms, which are specialized in the predication role. They are more or less distinct from verbs in Bambara, where they are considered either as 'adjectives' or 'stative verbs' according to the scholars. In Dadjo, they more clearly represent an original class of predicative adjectives.

3. Nouns are used very little in expressing qualification, but they may occur, both as modifiers or predicates (in the two constructions *copula + noun/circumstantial phrase* in the latter case). Although patterns of the type *copula + noun* refer more precisely to 'class membership' ('be an X') than to 'properties' ('be X'), it should be noted that in most languages some disabilities (such as 'blind', 'deaf/mute', 'lame', 'handicapped', 'epileptic', etc.) are expressed by *nouns*, referring either to the disability itself or to the disabled person (while these nouns themselves are often derived from verbs).

4. Participles and, to a much lesser extent, adverbs display some similarities to adjectives. Participles and adjectives – when they actually contrast – are more or less in complementary distribution (the former being derived from transitive/dynamic verbs, and the latter from intransitive/stative verbs) and marked in similar ways (both in predication and noun modification), but participles seem to be more restricted to the modifying role: they cannot easily be predicated because of their clear verbal origin and affinities, which automatically require

⁶ Cape Verdean is lexically based on Portuguese, with Manding and Wolof substrates. Palenquero is spoken in Colombia (South America), by descendants of trade slaves who were deported from the Gulf of Guinea; it is based on Spanish, with a Kikongo substrate.

⁷ See the respective typological generalizations (in particular Croft 1990 ; for a summary, see Sasse 1993).

the original verbal stem to be used in the predicate. In some cases, ‘adverbs’ (or ‘adverbial’ adjectives), which otherwise modify a predicate, may also modify a noun or even be predicated themselves, but they then require markers, which usually differ from the markers used for predicating both adjectives and participles.

Languages (classified) and contributors/sources

/Berber	Kabyle	Amina Mettouchi
/Chadic	Hausa	Bernard Caron
	Zaar	Bernard Caron
/Cushitic	Afar	Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle
/Semitic	Dahalik	Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle
/Atlantic	Bijogo	Guillaume Segerer
	Wolof	Loïc-Michel Perrin
/Mande	Bambara	Holger Tröbs
	Tigemaxo (Bozo)	Blecke 1996 (prepared by Holger Tröbs), Th. Blecke, <i>pers. comm.</i>
/Gur	Cefo	Kerstin Winkelmann
	Cerma	Gudrun Mieke
	Kulango	Stefan Elders
	Moore	Manfred von Roncador
	Nateni	Brigitte Nédellec
	Nootre	Manfred von Roncador
/Kwa	Gen	Rémy Bôle-Richard
/Bantu	Zulu	Michel Lafon
/Adamawa	Chamba-Daka	Raymond Boyd
/Ubangi	Gbaya 'Bodoe	Paulette Roulon-Doko
	Zande	Raymond Boyd
/Kordofanian	Koalib	Nicolas Quint
/Songhay	Songhay-Zarma	Oumarou Boukari
/Saharan	Kanuri	Eva Rothmaler
/Central Sudanic	Bongo	Pierre Nougayrol
	Yulu	Pascal Boyeldieu
/Eastern Sudanic	Dadjo-Sila	Pascal Boyeldieu
–	Cape Verdean	Nicolas Quint
–	Palenquero	Yves Moñino