

Historical origins of the Boze (Buji) people northwest of Jos

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1. Introduction

The Boze (Buji) language forms part of the ‘Jere cluster’ and is in turn part of the Northern Jos group of the East Kainji languages spoken north of Jos town in Central Nigeria. Very little has been published on this group, with a mimeo by Shimizu (1971) and some short wordlists (Shimizu 1980, 1982). This note makes further information available on the dialects and status of the language.

The Boze live east and west of the Jos-Zaria road which runs northwest of Jos, in Bassa Local government area.

The correct name for one Boze person is unaBoze and for the people anaBoze. the name of the language is *eboze*. The Boze are divided into two main dialects, εGorong and εKəkəkəŋ as well as a third rather divergent speech form, *efiru*. The ‘original’ Boze are considered to be the Anekəkəkəŋ. They live in nineteen villages. Their main villages are;

Original name	Modern name	Etymology	Moiety	Location
Àbènjàèl			G	
Ádòŋkòrəŋ			G	
Ásèrsiŋ	Minta		G	
Bicizà	Mista Ali		G	
Bidiri	Kongo	sticky soil	G	
Gòrəŋ I	Gurum	River name	G	
Gòrəŋ II	Gurum		G	
Lindàŋ			G	
Màlèempe	Jejin Fili		G	
Owòyoyò	Owoyoyo		G	West
Rèshòkò	Reshoko	shrub sp.	G	East
Rèwəə	Rafin Gwaza		G	
Ùrəkùùŋ	Urakun		G	East
Àmarujà		behind farmland	K	East
Àmarujà dizi			K	
Àturu	Ulu Aturu		K	West
Bintirí	Bintiri		K	West
Boolò	Zabolo		K	
Bèhòlè	Bihol		K	East
Bəri	Sarari		K	East
Bèsəə	Beso		K	East
Gbàndaŋ			K	East
Icizà	Rumfa		K	
Màkuŋ	Makun		K	East
Ògbènàkùrà	Mairaga		K	
Ógwara	Ugwara		K	East
Ópèègo			K	
Pepeeŋ	Tila		K	
Ribàmboze			K	
Ridapəə	Ridapo		K	East
Tipóò I	Tipo	barren rocks	K	
Tipóò II	Tipo	barren rocks	K	
Tùumu	Sarari ?		K	East
Ukweshi	Ukwashi		K	East
Zə̀ə̀lə̀ki	Zallaki		K	East
Zùku	N.N.P.C. Depot		Mixed	East

The other main group are the Gorong, whose history is more complex. There is a core population, the Ananyi ma Gorong or ‘people of the inner Gorong’ who are said to be the original inhabitants of the area, but whose language has now wholly been assimilated. The Anarubunu who adopted the name of Anagorong (Gorong is the name of a local river) are incomers. Historically they migrated from Ribina (Anarubunu a Adizi (lowland Ribina). On the upland they are known as Anarubunu a Kayaza and lived together with the Ananyi ma Gorong. The hills were once of substantial settlements: Adonkoron, Abonjolo, Kabiruwa . However, all the hill settlements have now been abandoned and they all live intermingled on the plains.

The settlements are divided into the Tikura or hill settlements and the Tuja or plains settlements. The Tikura are no longer inhabited but their settlements are as follows;

Gorong

<u>Name</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
Acεεηγε	
Gadarè	
Ɔcà	
Anyi magòrɔɔη	
Cincibi	
Azoowo	hill-top

Kokong

<u>Name</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
Wàŋgali	
Ùkuù	
Ábèrté	
Kamààri	
Ànɔtɔwɔ̀̀	
Cùŋkuul	
Òwòboze	

The Ananyi ma Gorong and Anarubunu live in thirteen settlements;

Also parts of the Anarubunu but speaking a very distinctive dialect are the Anofiru. They live surrounded by Amap, Bache, and Nfachara and their language is influenced by these other speech forms. They speak, as the other Boze say, ‘with a heavy tone’.

So Boze, despite being a small ethnic group has three distinct dialects. *Eboze* itself is a threatened language. The Anaboze had early contact with the Fulbe and Hausa as is shown by the fact that many of their family names are Hausa or Fulfulde names. Their masquerades speak Hausa, which was originally a language known only to a few older men, but of course now very common. Virtually all Anaboze are bilingual in Hausa. Anaboze cultural history has been heavily influenced by the expansion of tin-mining in their area in colonial times, leading to dispossession and resettlement, all of which added to the prestige of external languages and loss of indigenous vernaculars. Today, for example, it is common to find children who have only a passive knowledge of the language. For example, their parents may speak to them in *eboze*, but they reply in Hausa.

<u>Original name</u>	<u>Modern name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Tipoo			rocky terrains
Rewoh			stream of cocoyams
Bidiri			place of wetlands
Malempe			place of bush fields
Bichiza			place of wasteland
Sarsin			name after a stream
Tiwotebo			black or dark rocks
Ribamboze			?
Gorong			named after river
Amarugirgi			across rail line
Obene Akura			?
Ulindan			?
Afiru			Anafiru settlement

Numbers are hard to estimate in such a fluid situation, but local figures are some 4000 ethnic Boze with perhaps half of those fluent in the language. This proportion is declining fast. There has recently been some interest in reviving Boze culture, but action will need to be rapid and intensive to halt the slide.

BUJI DISTRICT VILLAGES

