

‘Shinni ma Shomi kan Kerfotagha’, a Kushi story

Gian Claudio Batic

Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies
University of Naples 'L'Orientale'

Abstract

Kushi is a minority Chadic language spoken in northeastern Nigeria. This article presents an oral text known as *Shinni ma Shomi kan Kerfotagha* (‘The story of Shomi and Kerfotagha’), a folktale depicting the adventures of Shomi, the Kushi trickster par excellence. The text is accompanied by word-by-word interlinear analysis and by an English translation.

Riasunto

Il kushi è una lingua ciadica minoritaria parlata nella Nigeria nordorientale. L’articolo presenta un testo orale conosciuto con il titolo di *Shinni ma Shomi kan Kerfotagha* (‘La storia di Shomi e Kerfotagha’), una storia della tradizione Kushi in cui vengono narrate le gesta di Shomi, l’astuto imbroglione per antonomasia. Il testo è accompagnato da un’analisi interlineare e da una traduzione in inglese.

Tsakure (Hausa)

Harshen Kushi shi ne wani karamin harshen da ake magana da shi a kauyen Kushi a arewa maso gabashin Nijeriya. An rubuta wannan maƙala a kan wani tatsuniya ta Kushi da ake kiranta *Shinni ma Shomi kan Kerfotagha* watau ‘Tatsuniya ta Shomi da Kerfotagha’. Darajar wannan tatsuniya ita ce ta ba da labari a kan mayaudari na al’adar gargajiya ta Kushi. An yi nazarin sigar tatsuniyar an kuma fassara ta zuwa Ingilisi.

1. Introduction

- <1> Kushi is a West Chadic language classified in the Tangale proper of the Bole-Tangale group (ISO 639-3 (kuh); Glottocode: kush1236). It is spoken by about 11,000 people (Lewis et al. 2015) living in the village area of Kushi and in a few hamlets nearby on the northern foothills of the Chonge-Mona range (Gombe State).¹

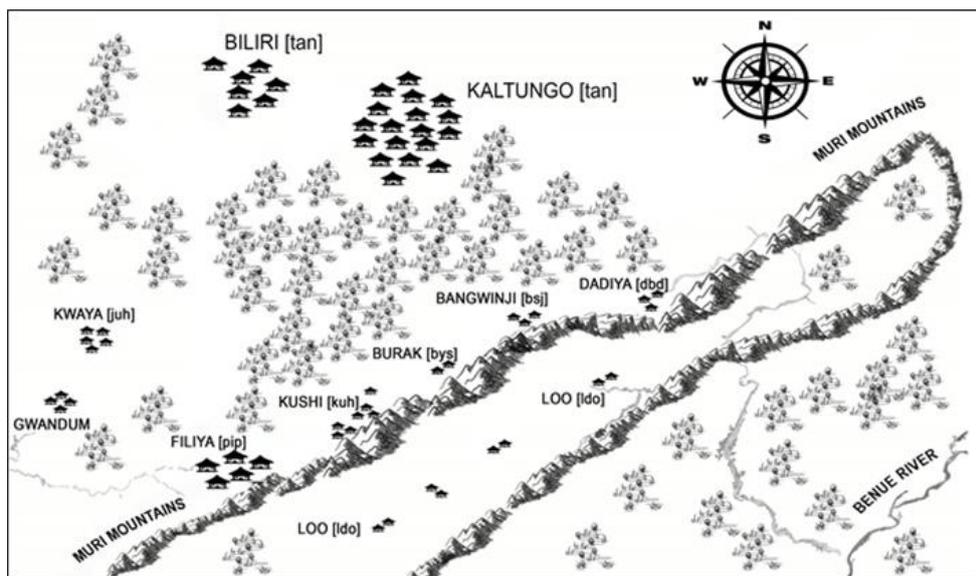


Figure 1 – Kushi and its neighbours

¹ A full account of the environment of the Kushi, Burak, and Bangwinji settlements can be found in Adelberger et al. (1993).

- <2> Kushi people refer to their language as *fò Gòjì* lit. ‘mouth (of) Kushi’. Several publications focusing on southern Bole-Tangale languages have appeared over the last three decades. A few of them dealt with punctual aspects of Kushi, mainly under a comparative perspective: Jungraithmayr and Leger (1993, 2006), Leger (1998, 2014).
- <3> No grammatical or lexical description of Kushi has ever been produced. The present contribution is the first output of an on-going project aiming at documenting, describing, and analysing the language as well as the oral tradition of the Kushi people.²

2. The story of Shomi and Kerfotagha

2.1. Themes of the story

- <4> The story of Shomi and Kerfotagha (*Shinni ma Shomi kan Kerfotagha*) narrates how Shomi, the main character, succeeds in turning every threat posed to him into a beneficial opportunity. By means of an unscrupulous cunning led by the instinct for survival, Shomi represents a well-known character in West African oral literature: that of the ingenious hero whose display of deceit is aimed at protecting his own life as well as the life of his family.³
- <5> The story can be divided into two parts, either part following the same scheme. In the first part, Kerfotagha visits his friend Shomi with the proposal to fight with him. If Shomi accepts, Kerfotagha will give him a he-goat. Since Kerfotagha is physically superior, Shomi is perfectly aware that his prospects of success are very limited and that playing by the rules would not be the best strategy in order to survive and keep the animal. Therefore, with the help of his sons Amurmulum and Tarangriwet, Shomi manages to fake the match, thus obtaining an otherwise improbable victory.
- <6> The second part is longer and, although built upon the same blueprint, more articulated from the point of view of event sequence. This time the threat is represented by Viper. One day, Viper goes to Shomi’s house with a big rooster and, like Kerfotagha before, a proposal: if Shomi accepts to be bitten, then he will have the cock. Of course, Shomi accepts, but on one condition: Viper should come back in three days. Viper does as told, but when he is back Shomi finds an excuse (i.e. his children are not around and he does not want to die without having kissed them one last time) and asks Viper to postpone the biting. After three days and before the coming of Viper, Shomi instructs his wife Firit on what to say to Viper. Then, he transforms himself into a baby boy. So, when Viper comes, Firit tells him that her husband is not around. The successful trick played by Shomi revolves around his surrealistic disguise: Firit goes out to call Shomi and asks Viper to look after the baby (i.e. Shomi) in her absence, but then the baby disappears and when Shomi (once regained his normal appearance) shows up and realizes that his child is nowhere to be found, he gets angry and punishes Viper for not having taken care of the baby. Needless to say, Viper will be killed, cooked and eaten by Shomi and his family.
- <7> An interesting feature of the story is that both Kerfotagha and Viper do not represent an immediate threat. They go to visit Shomi and propose *him a deal*. Shomi could express his disinterest for their plans and send them away, instead he promptly accepts their proposals. If he acts like that, it is because he knows that, just by relying on his cleverness, he will be able to manipulate the situation in such a way to transform an accepted risk (i.e. fighting with someone stronger than he or agreeing to be bitten by a viper) into a sure victory.
- <8> It is clear that the cunning of Kerfotagha and Viper does not stand a chance against Shomi’s survival instinct. Their offer exists only because it contains the background assumption that the other party will die in the very fulfilment of the deal. This implicit conviction relies on some kind of physical power that both Kerfotagha and Viper possess, but strength alone can’t overwhelm the resourceful mind of Shomi. Interestingly enough, the two agonists (that is the initiators of the chain of events) offer the same kind of explanation for their aim to harm Shomi: Kerfotagha wants to fight and Vipers wants to bite because since they were born they have never had the chance to fight and bite,

² I am very much indebted to Dr Rudolf Leger for having granted me full access to the Kushi-related material collected under the framework of the *Sonderforschungsbereich 268* (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main).

³ One of the closest literary cognates of Shomi (and his partner-in-crime Firit) can be identified in Gizo and his wife Koki, the tricksters of Hausa folklore.

respectively. This display of naivety, which is meant to mask the true intentions of the agonists, will set in motion the role play leading to the fatal resolution of the conflict.

2.2. Language and style

- <9> The style of the tale is quite linear. The events are narrated in logical order without making use of any special stylistic device, like for example the juxtaposition of (apparently) disconnected events that characterise the Kushi war song analysed by Leger (1993).
- <10> The text displays the following features:
- the narrator tends to introduce the actions of the characters as things that are said and not as things that are done. This is carried out throughout the text by making an extensive use of the verbal form *yàa* ‘say, saying’;
 - the preferred strategy to narrate the sequence of events is the use of the imperative form *mòo* ‘let’ followed by the subjunctive form of the verb *yù* ‘say, do’. The result is a chain of sentences, each of them introduced by the construction *mòo x yàa* ‘let x say/do’;
 - when things are actually said (ex. ‘let x say/do (that) x says y’), a logophoric pronoun is affixed to the verb *yù* ‘say, do’;
 - each sentence introduced by *mòo x yàa* ‘let x say/do’ may contain one or more subordinate clauses encoding the single action performed by *x*, i.e. the subject. These subordinate clauses need a subjunctive form, namely a subjunctive marker. In presence of a prenominal subject, the canonical subjunctive marker is an enclitic *-n* attached to the subject pronoun (*nè-n*, *khè-n*, *shì-n* etc.). In absence of a prenominal subject (or when the order is VOS, in which case no enclitic marker can be affixed to the pronoun), the subjunctive marker is an initial *?in*. Since the kind of subordinate clauses we are referring to tend to be subject-less (the subject being expressed once at the beginning of the sentence), it is this pre-verbal *?in* that is recurrently found in the text to mark the subjunctive;
 - a few words of clear Hausa origin, more or less integrated into Kushi, are found in the text: *amma* ‘but’, *ashe* ‘what!?’’, *bari* ‘let, leave’, *daga* ‘from’, *daidai* ‘correctly, exactly’, *damina* (<Ha. *damu* ‘be worried’), *har* ‘up to’, *kafin* ‘before’, *ko* ‘or’, *kuma* ‘also’, *kukkuwa* ‘wrestling’ (< Ha. *kokawa*), *kauye* ‘village’, ‘lie’, *lookoci* ‘time’ (< Ha. *lokaci*), *maza* ‘quick’, *sannan* ‘after’, *sosai* ‘very much’, *taba* ‘have never done (something)’, *tun* ‘since’, and *yanzu* ‘now’.

3. The text

- <11> The story has been collected by Malam Samson Waziri in the Kushi village area at the beginning of the ’90s. The narrator is Malam Lapandi Babale, 33 years old.
- <12> Kushi is a tonal language distinguishing between two punctual tones – high and low. In the text presented below low tones are marked with a grave accent, while discrete high tones are left unmarked. High tones are marked only in contour tones (ex. *tóò* ‘well’). Vowel length is also indicated, with the tone marked on the first vowel (ex. *pèemò* ‘he’). The voiced velar fricative (ɣ) is transcribed with gh, the aspirated velar (kh) with kh, and the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative (ʃ) with sh.

The following abbreviations are used:

DEF	definite form	OBJ	object pronoun
DIST	distance extension	pl	plural
FUT	future marker	PERF	perfect
GEN	genitive	POS	possessive pronoun
ICP	intransitive copy pronoun	REL	relative
LOG	logophoric pronoun	S	subject pronoun
m	masculine	SUJ	subjunctive
NEG	negation	VN	verbal noun

- (1) Mà Kèrfòtaghà kàn jèrè-nì tà Shòmi kùttà mina-jù,
s2pl Kerfotagha with friend-POS3m in Shomi sleep house-POS3pl
Kerfotagha and his friend Shomi are staying at their homes.
- (2) dàràṅ nòn dōk yè Kèrfòtaghà ʔillinà tì mina sheni
sun of some REL Kerfotagha stand on house POS3m
One day, Kerfotagha leaves his house
- (3) ʔin kèrin khù-nì Shòmi,
SUJ follow head-POS3m Shomi
and goes to the house of his friend Shomi.
- (4) yàa shii wan-na gàsshò ʔàn nèy,
say s3m come-DIST find person fight
He tells him that he is looking for a person to fight with,
- (5) yà tun lookòci yè nòn-nì pàttàn-nin
say since time REL mother-POS3m beget-OBJ3m.PERF
shii tabà yà nèy kàn niyò-m,
s3m never do.PERF fight with person-NEG
because since his mother gave birth to him he has never fought with anybody.
- (6) wende shii tòlli-nà gbe fara-ni kàn gàsshò ʔàn nèy,
now s3m pull-DIST big he goat-POS3m with find person fight
But now he got a big billy goat and whoever will fight with him will keep the animal.
- (7) mòo Shòmi yàa oh! pèemò tà gàsshàn ʔàn nèy,
let Shomi say oh! he FUT find.VN person fight
“Oh! Are you looking for someone to fight with you?” Shomi asks.
- (8) yàa oh! tóò
say oh! well
“Yes,” Kerfotagha says.
- (9) yàa mòo pèemò yà-ji wèeya shik-i
say let LOG3m say-LOG3m see.PERF body-DEF
Shomi tells his friend that he has seen the billy goat
- (10) yàa mòo pèemòn Kèrfòtaghà ʔin tük fara-i ʔin tükki-nà,
say let LOG3m Kerfotagha SUJ tie he goat-DEF SUJ tye-DIST
and that he should tie the animal. Kerfotagha ties the billy goat and
- (11) mòo Shòmi yàa shii tà lì kòddi yè
let Shomi say s3m FUT put time REL
shin tà wàra yàa nèy pèemòn wàrà,
s3pl FUT go do.VN fight LOG3m come
Shomi says that he will put time between now and the moment
they will come and fight, so that he will come at that time.
- (12) mòo Kèrfòtaghà yàa duma dàràṅ wenne,
let Kerfotagha say that sun what
Kerfotagha asks “When will it be?”.

- (13) ʔa Shòmì yàa duma shàghlò tàat,
 let Shomi say that day three
 Shomi replies that he should come after three days.
- (14) mòo Kèrfòtaghà yàa to yà-ji lèka tàat yà-ji tà wàrù.
 let Kerfotagha say yes say-LOG3m wait three say-LOG3m FUT come
 “Very well” Kerfotagha says, and then he goes back home and waits for three days.
- (15) shàghlò tàat ʔin wàrù
 day three SUJ come
 After three days, he comes back.
- (16) ʔin kwònì, ʔin yìw yàa nèy.
 SUJ meet SUJ get do fight
 They meet and start fighting.
- (17) Kèrfòtaghà ʔin shàr Shòmì ʔin kàn-nì-nà, ʔin shàr manni ʔin kàn-nì-nà
 Kerfotagha SUJ take Shomi SUJ lay-OBJ3m SUJ take another SUJ lay-OBJ3m
 Kerfotagha takes Shomi and brings him down, and again and again.
- (18) mòo Shòmì yàa pèemò-i kànnò-ni-m
 let Shomi say LOG3m-DEF lay-OBJ3m-NEG.PERF
 yàa kàn-na-nì shibo shòjàk,
 say lay-DIST-OBJ3m children dry grass
 Then Shomi gets up and says that it is not him, Kerfotagha,
 to bring him down, but the grass which is on the field,
- (19) dun shibo ʔà tèmmò khù dami-m kàn-na-nì
 because children NEG clean.PERF head field-NEG lay-DIST-OBJ3m
 bara shibo shòjàk shetey,
 only children dry grass these
 because the children have not cleared the area.
- (20) ʔamma mòo pèemòn Kèrfòtaghà mènò pèemò mina
 but let LOG3m Kerfotagha go.back LOG3m house
 màa shàghlò tàat biràŋ pèemòn shì-rù,
 when day three again LOG3m become-DIST
 He tells his friend to go back home again and to come back in three days.
- (21) shàghlò tàat-i ʔin yàa ʔin mè-rù tà Kèrfòtaghà
 day three-DEF SUJ do SUJ return-DIST in Kerfotagha
 ʔin wàrù wèey Shòmì
 SUJ come find Shomi
 After three days, he comes back again and meets with Shomi.
- (22) mòo Shòmì yàa pèemò fòn-nà yàa mòo Kèrfòtaghà yà-ji fòn-nà,
 let Shomi say LOG3m reach-DIST say let Kerfotagha say-LOG3m reach-DIST
 Shomi asks him if he has come back and Kerfotagha says that he is back.

- (23) ?in per khù dami tà shini,
 SUJ go head field in s3pl
 Then they go the field (and stand).
- (24) Shòmì ?in yàllò shik-ni huu huu, shii là-nò fòn-nì,
 Shomi SUJ shout body-POS3m huu huu s3m son-GEN father-POS3m
 shii là-nò là-nò gènnò-nì, shii là-nò nòn-nì,
 s3m son-GEN son-GEN uncle-POS3m s3m son-GEN mother-POS3m
 Shomi start shouting to himself, (saying that) he is the son of his father, he is
 the son of his uncle and of his mother,
- (25) shini tà yàa kùkkuwà bwòy,
 s3pl FUT do wrestling today
 and that today they are going to fight.
- (26) ?àshee Shòmì shirìnà wè-nì kagh,
 what! Shomi prepare thing-POS3m all
 But then, what a surprise! (Kerfotagha doesn't know that) Shomi has played one of his tricks.
- (27) yàa-nà mà ?Àmùrmùlùm kàn Tàràngriwèt,
 call-DIST 2pl Amurmulum and Tarangriwet
 He has called Amurmulum and Tarangriwet (his sons),
- (28) mà ?Àmùrmùlùm kàn Tàràngriwèt wàrù ?òppò jwal
 s2pl Amurmulum and Tarangriwet come dig hole
 tì khù dami kàn jòori
 on head field with depth
 and they came to dig a deep hole in the ground.
- (29) ?in shàrù shòjàk kàn shibo bìrò ?in màrin tì fò jwal-i
 SUJ take dry grass with children tree SUJ line on mouth hole-DEF
 They have brought waste grass, a small stick and a stone and placed these things
 near the hole,
- (30) ?in pàl bùk ?in màn khù daidai kerero sai kàn
 SUJ collect sand SUJ push on head exactly enough only with
 sai kàn fò bùk-i
 only with mouth sand-DEF
 then they have levelled the ground with some sand in the correct way.
- (31) tóò daga yè yika yà nèy
 yes from REL started do fight
 When the two friends come to the field and start fighting,
- (32) Shòmì ?in yiw shènnù Kèrfòtaghà tì fò-r pìrenna
 Shomi SUJ do push Kerfotagha on mouth-GEN there
 yè kàn fò jwal tèere, Kèrfòtaghà waa kòon tì tày karaw,
 REL with mouth hole there Kerfotagha want go on inside fall
 Shomi starts pushing Kerfotagha towards the edge of the hole so that, after a while, his
 friend falls into it.

- (33) dàgà yè kokan tì tà jwal
 from REL fall on inside hole
 When Kerfotagha falls into the hole,
- (34) Shòmi ?in kùman shàr ?ànkwàràmi-nì ?in birin ?àdô.
 Shomi SUJ immediately take stick-POS3m SUJ beat eye
 quickly Shomi grabs his stick and beats his friend's eye.
- (35) ?àdô ?in ?òwòò-ro,
 eye SUJ swollen-ICP3f
 Kerfotagha's eyes swell,
- (36) Shòmi ?in tèwìn ?àdô-nì tì tà jwal-i,
 Shomi SUJ tell eye-POS3m on inside hole-DEF
 then Shomi asks what happens with his eyes.
- (37) yàa duma yùwa ?àdô pèemòn Kèrfòtaghà wènè yàa màa yùwa,
 say that do.PERF eye LOG3m Kerfotagha what say when do.PERF
 Shomi starts (mocking his friend) asking him what is happening to his face
- (38) yàa pèemè tà wàrà gàsshà niyò kà fara,
 say LOG3m FUT go find.VN person with he goat
 and saying that he will go to find another person with a he-goat to fight with.
- (39) yàa mòo pèemòn Kèrfòtaghà pè-rù-n tì tà jwal-i,
 say let LOG3m Kerfotagha get out-DIST on in hole-DEF
 Kerfotagha tell Shomi to let him come out from the hole
- (40) màa yùwa, yàa pèemò tà gàsshò ?àn nèy khù-nò
 when do.PERF say LOG3m FUT find person fight head-GEN
 pèemò ka khù shiila
 LOG3m like head stone
 and that he will look for another fighter (because) his head is like a stone.
- (41) yànzù màa yè pèemò tà pèràni pèemòn wàrà gàsshù-rò fò pèrù
 now when REL LOG3m will go.out LOG3m go find-DIST mouth outside
 Now he looks where to come out
- (42) ?à wa koyo pèrù-m
 NEG get way outside-NEG
 but doesn't find a way out,
- (43) ?in mùrìn tì fò tèerè.
 SUJ die on mouth there
 so he dies there in the hole.
- (44) sa?annan dàràṅ non dök
 after sun of some
 After some time,
- (45) ?Ankarkenshey ?in yì-rù gwé gokh-ni
 Viper SUJ catch-DIST big rooster-POS3m
 Viper catches a big rooster.

- (46) tà wàrà gàsshò mòo shii tà munin
 FUT go find let S3m FUT give
 He wants to find somebody to give the rooster to
- (47) dum shii-n yèrì,
 because S3m-SUJ bite
 and then bite him,
- (48) dun tun lookòci yè nòn-nò kàn fòn-nò pàttà-nin
 because since time REL mother-GEN and father-GEN beget-OBJ3m.PERF
 because since he was born – from his father and his mother –
- (49) shii tabà yèrì niyò-m,
 S3m never bite.PERF person-NEG
 he has never bitten anybody.
- (50) àmma màa mòo yìghù shii-n yèrì,
 but when let receive S3m-SUJ bite
 Hence, whoever will take the cock, he will bite him.
- (51) sànnan ?in wàrìn fò minà-no Shòmì,
 after SUJ go mouth house-GEN Shomi
 He follows the road to Shomi's house.
- (52) mòo Shòmì yàa dùma pèemò wàn-nà tòghnè ka tètì,
 let Shòmì say that LOG3m come-DIST where like this
 Shomi asks Viper where he goes like that,
- (53) yàa mòo ?Ankarkenshey yàa shii wàna gàsshò mo tà
 say let Viper say S3m come-DIST find who FUT
 yìw gbe gòkh-nì shii tètì.
 get big rooster-POS3m 3m this
 and Viper says that he is looking for somebody
 willing to accept his big rooster,
- (54) màa mòo yìwa shii-n yèrì shii,
 when let get S3m-SUJ bite POS3m
 since he will bite the person who gets the animal.
- (55) mòo Shòmì bara paroy tètì yàa,
 let Shomi only talk this say
 Shomi asks if this is the only thing that has brought him there.
- (56) mòo ?Ankarkenshey yàa Uuo! tóò
 let Viper say Uuo! well
 Viper says yes,
- (57) Shòmì ?in yìwì gbe gokh-i.
 Shomi SUJ get big cock-DEF
 then Shomi gets the rooster

- (58) mò Shòmì yàa pèemòn ?Ankarkenshey mò pèemò wànnò, pèemò,
 let Shomi say LOG3m Viper let LOG3m go LOG3m
 and tells Viper to go (home)
- (59) màa yùwa shàghlò tàat pèemòn shìrù,
 when do.PERF day three LOG3m return
 and come back in three days
- (60) pèemò màa pèemòn wàrù yèr-nì
 LOG3m when LOG3m come bite-POS3m
 to bite him.
- (61) ?Ankarkenshey ?in kòoni
 Viper SUJ go
 So Viper leaves,
- (62) ?in wàn-ni minà-ni,
 SUJ go-ICP3m house-POS3m
 returns to his house
- (63) ?in yù-rù shàghlò tàat
 SUJ do-DIST day three
 and, when three days have passed,
- (64) ?in shìrù, wàrù Shòmì wèey Shòmì tì minà-ni,
 SUJ return come Shomi see Shomi on house-POS3m
 he comes back to meet with Shomi in his house.
- (65) yàa pèemò Shòmì, yà-ji fòn-nà wàra yèr pèemò,
 say LOG3m Shomi say-LOG3m reach-DIST go bite LOG3m
 so he meets Shomi in the house) and says that he has returned to bite him.
- (66) mò Shòmì yàa shibò-ni wàràa-ju dòon,
 let Shomi say children-POS3m go-ICP3P farm
 then Shomi tells him that his children have gone to farm,
- (67) yàa mò pèemò meno pèemò sai shàghlò tàat bìràñ,
 say let LOG3m go back LOG3m until day three again
 so that it's better if he comes back in three days.
- (68) kàfin pèemò mara wàrù,
 before LOG3m when come
 when his children are back,
- (69) shii-n tèt tì shibo-ni ?à rà war mánni piri-m,
 s3m-SUJ tell on children-POS3m NEG FUT go another place-NEG
 he will tell them not to go anywhere that day,
- (70) dun kawoo ghè fò mùrù-nì,
 because bring looking mouth death-POS3m
 so they will see the day of their father's death.

- (71) ?Ankarkenshey ?in mèri-ni mina biràn,
 Viper SUJ return-ICP3m house again
 Viper returns to his house
- (72) shàghlò tàat ?in yàa, ?Ankarkenshey ?in kon mèyàa-ni
 day three SUJ do Viper SUJ leave return-ICP3m
 and after three days (– as he was told –), he is back again.
- (73) lookòci yè tà mèn,
 time REL FUT return
 The same day Viper is supposed to come,
- (74) Shòmì ?in shiwòo-ni là tòghmè tì kirà-no mànnà-ni tà Firit, tóò
 Shomi SUJ turn-ICP3m child baby on hand-GEN wife-POS3m in Firit well
 Shomi transforms himself into a baby boy on the hand of his wife Firit.
- (75) yàa pèen mànnà-ni tà Firit
 say LOG3f wife- POS3m in Firit
 he tells his wife Firit to say to Viper,
- (76) yàa màa fon-na,
 say when reach-DIST
 when he comes,
- (77) yàa mòo pèe tètò yà-ji wàròo-ni *kauyè* koo *kuma* shèkì mina,
 say let s3f tell say-LOG3m go-ICP3m village or also between house
 that he has gone to the village or to his friend’s house.
- (78) ?Ankarkenshey ?in fòn-tù
 Viper SUJ reach-DIST
 Viper comes (and asks for Shomi),
- (79) mòo Firit yàa pèemò, yàa mànnà-ro wàràni shekì mina,
 let Firit say LOG3m say husband-POS3f go.VN between house
 then Firit tells him that her husband has gone to visit his friend.
- (80) mòo pèemò yiw là-i,
 let LOG3m get child-DEF
 let him have the baby boy (she says),
- (81) mòo-rò wàr tèllù pèri tì gùn birò fò nèsshò-ju,
 let-POS3f go ask place on under tree mouth rest-POS3P
 so she goes to check the baby under the tree where they usually rest.
- (82) ?in mùnìn là-i tì kira-i, ?in kòo-ro wàra yè-rù mànnà-ro
 SUJ give son-DEF on arm-DEF SUJ go-ICP3f go call-DIST husband-POS3f
 he gives the baby boy to Viper and leaves to call her husband.
- (83) shimo Shòmì, yè Firit kònàa-ro wàra gàsshò birò mànnà-ro,
 3m Shomi REL Firit leave-ICP3f go find tree husband-POS3f
 as soon as Firit leaves to check on her husband,

- (84) sai là-i ?in yàa shappàn tì shik-nò ?Ankarkenshey,
 then son-DEF SUJ do diarrhoea on body-GEN Viper
 the baby discharges a flow of diarrhoea on Viper's body.
- (85) ?Ankarkenshey ?in ràsshò wè-i tèghlani,
 Viper SUJ lack thing-DEF clean.VN
 Viper doesn't have anything to clean (himself).
- (86) yà-ji tègh làa tèerè
 say-LOG3m clean stool that
 eventually he manages to clean his body,
- (87) ?in yuwun manni biran, Ankarkenshey ?in dàminà sòsai,
 SUJ do another again Viper SUJ worry very much
 but then the child discharges another flow and Viper becomes really worried.
- (88) ?in shàr là-i ?in wà li-rù tì khù fò shàghlò
 SUJ take child-DEF SUJ go put-DIST on head mouth sleep
 so he takes the baby and puts him in a place for sleeping,
- (89) ?in pèr-ni gàsshò wè-i tèghò làa là-i.
 SUJ come out-ICP3m find thing-DEF clean stool child-DEF
 then he goes out to look for something to clean the stools discharged by the child.
- (90) ?in pè-rù ?in gàsshinà ?à wèey wè-i fò teghlò-nù-m
 SUJ come out-DIST SUJ find NEG find thing-DEF mouth clean-NEG
 but when he goes out he doesn't find anything
- (91) ?in kòò mèn mina-i yà-ji mèya tà mina-i
 SUJ go return house-DEF say-LOG3m return inside house-DEF
 and when he goes back inside
- (92) ?à wèey wè-i shik là-i tì pèrè liya-ni-m tì fò shàghlò
 NEG find thing-DEF body child-DEF on where put-POS3m-NEG.PERF on mouth sleep.
 the child is not where he has left him, that is in the sleeping place.
- (93) là-i ?illii-ni ?in pèrè-ni fòn-nà,
 child-DEF stand-ICP3m SUJ go out-ICP3m reach out-DIST
 the baby boy has stood up and gone out,
- (94) ?in yiw gàsshò bì là-i
 SUJ start find back child-DEF
 and Viper keeps looking where he has gone,
- (95) ?à wà-m, har Firit ?in mèrin tì yòl mànnà-rò-i,
 NEG get-NEG up to Firit SUJ return on call husband-POS3f-DEF
 but without success.
- (96) yàa duma pèemòn ?Ankarkenshey yàa là-i tòghnè,
 say that LOG3m Viper say child-DEF where
 after a while Firit comes back home. She asks Viper where her child is.

- (97) mòò ?Ankarkenshey yà-ji liya là-i tì fò
 let Viper say-LOG3m put child-DEF on mouth
 shàghlò yè maghna-ni shappàn tì shik-nì
 sleep REL pass to-POS3m diarrhoea on body-POS3m
 Viper answers that he has put the child in the place for sleeping
- (98) yyùnzù yà-ji wàra gèè là-i, là-i,
 now say-LOG3m go see child-DEF child-DEF
 but now he has just gone to see the baby (106) and cannot find him anywhere.
- (99) ?à wàa-m tì fò shàghlò-m.
 NEG find-NEG on mouth sleep-NEG
 and cannot find him anywhere.
- (100) màa tì gàsshò bì là-i, tà shìni, shìni mànnà-no Shòmì.
 when on find back child-DEF in s3pl s3pl wife-POS1m Shomi
 Whilst Viper and Firit are looking for the baby boy,
- (101) Shòmì tì rii,
 Shomi on enter
 homi comes in
- (102) mòò Shòmì yàa pèemò ?Ankarkenshey fòn-nà yàa?
 let Shomi say LOG3m Viper reach-DIST say
 and immediately asks if Viper has come.
- (103) yàa Uuh! yà-ji fònnò,
 say Uuh! say-LOG3m reach.PERF
 Yes, Viper says.
- (104) mòò Shòmì yàa, tóò bari mòò-ji shàr là-nì
 let Shomi say well leave let-POS3m take child-POS3m
 Shomi says to bring him his child,
- (105) shii-n shùmmò fòk-i kàfin pèemòn tàgh yèr-nì,
 s3m-SUJ kiss mouth-DEF before LOG3m start bite-POS3m
 so that he could kiss the baby before Viper bites him.
- (106) yà-ji pàmma yàa bwòy dàràṅ mùròo-ni,
 say-LOG3m thank say today sun die-ICP3m
 He thanks (God) for his death today.
- (107) ?in tèl mànnà-ni tà Firit yàa mòò pèè shàr-nì là-nì
 SUJ ask wife-POS3m in Firit say let s3f take-POS3m child-POS3m
 Shomi asks his wife Firit to bring the child
- (108) mòò-ji shùmmò fòk-ni kawa tàgh mùròo-ni.
 let-POS3m kiss mouth-POS3m for start die-ICP3m
 because he wants) to kiss him on the mouth before (the moment of) his death.
- (109) sànnan mòò Firit yàa jèrè-nò pèemò fòo-na
 after let Firit say friend-GEN LOG3m reach-DIST
 Then his wife tells him that his friend has come

- (110) ?in tèl pin-no pèemò, tè-n tètòn
 SUJ ask place-GEN LOG3m s3f-SUJ tell
 and has asked for him and that she has told him
- (111) tara pèemò wara-no pèemò sheki mina tèn shàr là-i
 that LOG3m go.off LOG3m between house tell take child-DEF
 that he had gone to the village, so she has taken the child
- (112) tèn mùnin tara mòo-rò wà yè-rù pèemò, yanzu tèn wàrù.
 tell give that let-OBJ3m go call-DIST LOG3m now tell come
 and given him to Viper, and then she has left to call him. And now she is back.
- (113) te wan là-i tì kira-m, kere waran là-i manni pìrey
 s3f find child-DEF on hand-NEG maybe go child-DEF another place
 (But now) she doesn't find the child, maybe he has gone somewhere,
- (114) te peno-m, Firit ?in tèl ?Ankarkenshey yàa дума là-i tòghnè,
 s3f know-NEG Firit SUJ ask Viper say that child-DEF where
 Firit asks Viper where her child is.
- (115) mòo ?Ankarkenshey yàa là-i mangha-ni làa tì shik-ni
 let Viper say child-DEF pass to-POS3m stool on body-POS3m
 Viper says that the baby has discharged a flow of diarrhoea over his body
- (116) shii-n li là-i tì khù fò-r shàghlò,
 s3m-SUJ put child-DEF on head mouth-of sleep
 and that he has put him in the sleeping place
- (117) shii-n wàn-ni shiddò làa là-i,
 s3m-SUJ go-ICP3m clean stool child-DEF
 and then he has gone out to clean himself,
- (118) saja shii wan-na ?ado là-i tì fò shàghlò-m.
 before s3m come-DIST NEG child-DEF on mouth sleep-NEG
 ut once he was back the child was not there.
- (119) mòo Shòmì yàa pèemò ?Ankarkenshey
 let Shomi say LOG3m Viper
 when Shomi tells Viper
- (120) mòo pèemò gàsshù-rù-ni bì là-ni maza-maza
 let LOG3m find-DIST-POS3m back child-POS3m quick-quick
 to find his child quickly,
- (121) nènà bwòy dàràŋ mùrò-nì yàa.
 because today sun death-POS3m say
 or today is the day of his death.
- (122) ?adò paro yè ?Ankarkenshey tà tètànì-m,
 nothing talk REL Viper FUT tell.VN-NEG
 Since Viper is not saying anything,

- (123) mòo Shòmì mòo pèemòn ?Ànmùrùmùlùm shàr-nì bàràmtàm-nì *maza*
 let Shomi let LOG3m Red.Lizard take-POS3m *gariyo*-POS3m quick
 homi asks (his son) Anmurumulum to bring him his *gariyo*⁴ rapidly.
- (124) ?Ànmùrùmùlùm wana ?in wà shàrìn bàràmtàm-nì
 Red Lizard go SUJ go bring *gariyo*-POS3m
 ?in pèrìn tì Shòmì, tóò ?Ankarkenshey dama *sòsai*.
 SUJ come.out on Shomi well Viper worry very much
 anmurumulum brings him his *gariyo* and now Viper is really worried:
- (125) màa wàra fò she, ?in wàr fò she tà gàsshò
 when go mouth here SUJ go mouth here in find
 fò shòw khù-nì
 mouth put head-POS3m
 he goes right, he goes left, he looks for a way of escape,
- (126) ?à rà wèyàni-m, yà-ji wèeya gùn tèkki shiila
 NEG FUT see.VN-NEG say-LOG3m see under line stone
 ut he can't find one. Then he finds a hole under a stone
- (127) yà-ji tà shòwìn khù-ni,
 say-LOG3m FUT put head-POS3m
 nd tries to put his head there.
- (128) Shòmì ?in shàr baramtam-ni ?in kànni khù maza.
 Shomi SUJ take *gariyo*-POS3m SUJ cut head quick
 homi takes his *gariyo* and quickly cuts Viper's head.
- (129) Shòmì ?in wàn-ni kàwak-nò ?Ankarkenshey
 Shomi SUJ go-ICP3m abuse-GEN Viper
 Shomi starts abusing Viper (for the foolishness he has done),
- (130) yàa gbe gònò pèemò ka luru shèl jèè.
 say big stomach LOG3m like bag put beans
 saying that his stomach is like a bag of beans,
- (131) màa Firit yàa shùllàn fòk-nò pèemò ka fò kuret tà dòo-i,
 when Firit say pointed mouth-GEN LOG3m like mouth snake in water-DEF
 while his wife Firit says that his mouth is like that of a water snake.
- (132) ?in tòllù-rù kùmà-no ?Ankarkenshey
 SUJ pull-DIST corpse-GEN Viper
 Shomi pulls out the dead body of Viper
- (133) ?in wàrùn pippino kàn dèet ?in linà tà telàṅ
 SUJ bring burn with fire SUJ put in pot
 and brings it (home): he burns it with fire, cuts it, puts it in the pot,

⁴ Hausa word designating the double-bladed Barebari throwing-weapon (Abraham 1962).

- (134) ʔin dɪŋhi-na ʔin ʔàdɪnà shìn kàmà shibo-nì shìn dɪŋ.
 SUJ cook-DIST SUJ eat S3pl INCL children-POS3m 3pl all
 and they all eat it together.

References

Abraham, Roy Clive 1962

Dictionary of the Hausa Language. London: University of London Press.

Adelberger, Jörg, Karsten Brunk, and Ulrich Kleinewillinghöfer 1993

‘Natural environment and settlement in Chonge district, eastern Muri mountains, northeastern Nigeria. An interdisciplinary case study.’ In Nagel, Günter. (ed.), *Berichte des Sonderforschungsbereichs 268*, Vol. 2, pp. 13-42. Frankfurt/Main: Goethe University.

Dinslage, Sabine and Rudolf Leger 1996

‘Language and migration: the impact of the Jukun on Chadic speaking groups in the Benue-Gongola Basin’. In *Berichte des Sonderforschungsbereichs 268*, Vol. 8, pp. 67-75. Frankfurt/Main: Goethe University.

Jungrathmayr Herrmann and Rudolf Leger 1993

‘The Benue-Gongola-Chad Basin – Zone of Ethnic and Linguistic Compression’. In Nagel, Günter. (ed.), *Berichte des Sonderforschungsbereichs 268*, Vol. 2, pp. 161-172. Frankfurt/Main: Goethe University.

Jungrathmayr Herrmann and Rudolf Leger 2006

‘Loss, shift and growth in Southern Bole-Tangale languages: The interplay of internal and external factors in language development’. In Nicolăi, Robert and Petr Zima (eds.), *Lexical and structural diffusion*, pp. 79-89. Nice: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de Nice.

Leger, Rudolf 1993

‘A Kushi war song.’ *Annals of Borno* 8/9: 234-238

Leger, Rudolf 1998

‘Grammatical gender in some southern Bole-Tangale languages: Kwami, Kupto, Kushi and Piya’. In Institute of African Studies (ed.), *Africa: Society, culture and language*, pp. 204-216. Moscow: IAS.

Leger, Rudolf 2014

‘Some observations on typological features in languages of the Bole-Tangale group’. In Storch, Anne, Johannes Harnischfeger, and Rudolf Leger (eds.), *Fading Delimitations. Multilingual Settlements in a Convergence Area – Case studies from Nigeria*, pp. 229-262. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe

Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.)

Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 18th edition, SIL International, Dallas 2015. Online version: <http://ethnologue.com/18/> (27.10.2017)