

The verbal system in Gepinzi (B 30)

Rébecca Grollemund

University of Lyon - France

This paper will present the results of a preliminary analysis of the verbal system in Gepinzi, a Bantu language spoken in Gabon. The data for this paper was collected between June and August 2008.

The Gepinzi language belongs to the linguistic group named TSOGO (B 30, which includes seven languages). Spoken by approximately 500 speakers, Gepinzi is an endangered language.

The verbal system of Gepinzi is very complex. Indeed, the verb string presents the following structure :

(1)	(2) *	(3) *	4	(5) *	(6)	7
<i>Subject Marker</i>	<i>Negative Marker</i>	<i>Tense/Aspect Marker</i>	<i>ROOT</i>	<i>Extension(s)</i>	<i>Pre-final</i>	<i>Final</i>

First, I will study the verb morphology. Subject markers, negative markers, predicative markers and verbal extensions will be looked into. Second, I will examine how tense and aspect are encoded in the language. There are several ways of encoding tenses and aspects in Gepinzi : the simplest way, which implies only one tense or one aspect marker, i.e. Root (4) + tense marker (7), but also more complex strings where prefixes and suffixes are combined to express those grammatical categories. For example, a complex verbal structure in Gepinzi is composed of one or two tense/aspect markers (3) + Root (4) + pre-final (6) + final (7). Most of the verbal constructions found in this language will be described and examples will be provided for each form presented.

Finally, a special attention will be given to the historical origin of the TAM's markers in Gepinzi and in the B 30 group, in order to understand its general structure as well as its evolution.