

KWAZA OR KOAIÁ, AN UNCLASSIFIED LANGUAGE OF RONDÔNIA, BRAZIL*

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1. Introduction

Although Kwaza, in the literature Koaiá, Quaiá, Coaia or Koaya, is usually classified as an isolated language, it is better to say that it is still an unclassified language. The purpose of the present paper is to present the basic grammatical characteristics of the Kwaza language. I will furthermore point out indications for possible areal linguistic relationships with equally unclassified neighbouring languages. But first I will briefly discuss the geographical, social, cultural and historical context of the language.

2. The context of Kwaza

Kwaza is spoken in the indigenous reserve Tubarão-Latundê in the south of the Brazilian federal state of Rondônia. Geographically and ecologically, Southern Rondônia belongs to the Amazon basin and it harbours headwaters of the Guaporé (or Itenes) and the Pimenta Bueno (or Apediá) rivers. Culturally, the inhabitants of this region belong to the Guaporé culture area (Lévi-Strauss 1948), more recently also termed the Marico cultural complex (Maldi 1991). This culture area is characterized by hunting and gathering in the tropical rain forest, swidden agriculture, carrying nets ('maricos') and hammocks made of tucuma palm tree fibre, sifted and fermented maize beer ('chicha'), specific musical instruments (Snethlage 1939), beehive-shaped communal huts ('malocas'), shamanistic practices which involve hallucinogenic powder ('rapé') based on angico seeds, specific oral traditions, and an egalitarian societal structure. In contrast to this relative cultural homogeneity, southern Rondônia is the traditional region of a highly diverse set of indigenous Amazonian languages. Many languages of the Tupi stock are still spoken, some Chapakura languages, some

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Nambikwara languages, one language of the Carib family was once spoken, one or several Arawak languages, two languages of the small Jabuti family (possibly macro-Jê) are still spoken and there are three unclassified languages which are often regarded as isolated: Aikanã, Kanoê and Kwaza.

The first contacts between the indigenous peoples of southern Rondônia and the Europeans must have taken place in the 18th century. During the first decades of the 20th century, it was one of the most important regions for the exploitation of natural rubber. In that same period, several scientific expeditions were organized, e.g. by Rondon (1916), Nordenskiöld (1915), Snethlage (1937), Dequech (1943) and Caspar (1975). During this period, many indigenous peoples of the region were in contact with European culture for the first time. The presence in general of the non-Indians resulted in a sharp decline of the indigenous populations, especially through diseases. During the last decades, the original ecological environment became much disturbed through deforestation and cattle ranching. Today, the remnants of the indigenous peoples of Rondônia live mainly in reserves and their cultures and languages are highly endangered and not very well documented.

Today there are about 25 speakers of Kwaza. They live in one reserve together with about 150 Aikanã (unclassified) and 20 Latundê (Nambikwara). One speaker of Kwaza still lives in the São Pedro river region, which is one of the traditional homelands of the Kwaza. The other speakers belong to two different families in the reserve. The members of one of the families live in two isolated places, and the members of the other family live in mixed Aikanã settlements. I have done fieldwork with both families.

The first recorded reference to the Kwaza occurred in 1913 (Rondon 1916:155-156, Rondon and Barbosa 1948:183). Before my own fieldwork, the existing documentation of the language consisted of word lists (Lévi-Strauss 1938, Zack 1943, Carlson 1984). A total of only 39 different lexical items were available in published form (Loukotka 1963, Rodrigues 1986).

3. Phonology

The indigenous phoneme inventory of Kwaza comprises eight oral vowels, seven nasal vowels and 19 consonants. I have listed them in tables (1) and (2) below:

	<i>oral vowels</i>			<i>nasal vowels</i>		
	front	central	back	front	central	back
close	i		u	ĩ		ũ
close-mid	e	y		ẽ	ỹ	
open-mid	ɛ	œ	o	ẽ		õ
open		a			ã	

Table 1: Kwaza vowel phonemes

	labial	lamino- alveolar	apico- alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	p	t	c		k	ʔ
implosive	b		d			
affricate		ts		tx		
fricative		s	ç			h
nasal	m		n	ɲ		
trill/tap			r			
lateral			l			
approximant	w			j		

Table 2: Kwaza consonant phonemes

Kwaza has no phonemic tone, stress or length. Because the exact rules for stress placement have not yet been established I have indicated main word stress by an apostrophe ['] that precedes the stressed syllable in a polysyllabic word. Kwaza syllable structure is predominantly (C)V. When the syllable contains one or more glides, then the structure is more complex: (C)(G)V(G). I have analysed the glides which occur in onset position as consonant phonemes /j/ and /w/, and the glides which occur in at the end of the syllable as allophones of the vowels /i/, /u/ and /y/. The language has no consonant clusters other than consonant-glide combinations. It is possible that the palatal affricate /tx/ originates from a combination of the apico-alveolar plosive /c/ and the lamino-alveolar fricative /s/. A special feature of the consonant system is that there seems to be an opposition between plosive and implosive consonants, rather than between voiced and voiceless consonants.

4. Grammatical characteristics

Kwaza has four basic parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adverbs and particles. There are no adjectives. Kwaza is a morphologically complex language and the majority of the bound grammatical morphemes are suffixes. The morphological complexity resides mainly in the verbs. Word order is relatively free, but the configurations SOV and SVO prevail.

4.1. Verbal inflection

Verbs are obligatorily inflected for mood and subject person. Note the following examples:

- (1) *hã* *'kui-da-ki*
 water drink-1S-DEC
 'I drank/am drinking water'

- (2) *hã* 'kui-ça-ki
 water drink-2-DEC
 'you drank/are drinking water'

Subject agreement marking distinguishes first and second person singular, first person inclusive and exclusive, and the second person plural. The third person is zero marked and there is neither a distinction between third person singular and plural nor between masculine and feminine.¹ This is probably related to the fact that Kwaza nouns are not inflected for number or gender. Similarly, first and second person plural are better analysed as being subject to distinctions of association than of number. Table (3) below reflects this analysis. Kwaza is a so-called 'pro-drop' language in that subject agreement is obligatory, whereas pronominal reference is optional. Definite argument morphemes may agree with overt lexical arguments, but the presence of overt pronouns has an emphatic or contrastive effect:

- (3) *si* 'kui-da-ki *hã*
 I drink-1S-DEC water
 'it is me who is drinking/drank water'

The pronominal system of Kwaza distinguishes the same categories as the cross-reference morphemes do, with the exception of indefinite and impersonal reference, for which there are no pronominal forms. In the table below it is shown that there is no formal resemblance between the pronouns and the verbal agreement morphemes:

<i>person</i>	<i>associate</i>	<i>pronoun</i>	<i>inflection</i>	<i>meaning</i>
1		si	-da-	I
2		çyi	-ça-	you
1	2	txa'na	-a-	we (inclusive)
1	3	tsi'tse	-a-ça-	we (exclusive)
2	3	çyi'tse	-ça-ça-	you (plural)
3		ĩ		he, she, it, they
IS			-wa-	they, people, it

Table 3: Personal pronouns and subject cross-reference

In addition to subject cross-reference, there also object morphemes, but there are no special object pronouns:

- (4) *zjwãu* *mẽ-hata-ki* *çyitse-wã*
 João beat-3S.2O-DEC you.PL-AO
 'it was João who beat you'

¹ There are, however, cross-reference forms for impersonal and indefinite (third) person.

The paradigm of object cross-reference is less systematic than that of subject inflections and there are several portmanteau subject/object morphemes. In addition to the third person subject - second person object morpheme *-hata-* illustrated above, the morpheme *-nĩnã-* agrees with to non-third person subjects in general and second person objects. The following example shows how this morpheme precedes the first person subject morpheme *-da-*:

- (5) *'mẽ-nĩ'nã-da-ki*
beat-1/2S.2O-1S-DEC
'I am beating you'

Since the object morphemes occur deeper inside the verb, and since they are less obligatory than the subject markers, the object morphemes may be derivational rather than inflectional elements.

Kwaza verb morphology can express a number of different moods, such as declarative, interrogative, imperative, negative imperative, exhortative:

- (6) *kawe kui-'nã-ça-re*
coffee drink-FUT-2-INT
'do you want to drink coffee?'
- (7) *hã 'kui-?a-ni*
water drink-1P-EXH
'let us drink water!'

The imperative occurs only with second person subjects, and the second person singular usually gets zero-expression:

- (8) *kui-0-ra*
drink-2-IMP
'drink!'

This suggests that the single element *-ça-* in the expression of second person plural imperative represents the associated person, and not the second person. This is true also for the negative imperative:

- (9) *'kui-he-ça-'ky*
drink-NEG-AS-NEI
'don't you (PL) drink that!'²

In addition to matrix clause moods, there are also a number of verb-final elements which may be regarded as subordinate clause mood markers. These are used in adverbial clause constructions such as conditional and concessive. The same subject and object morphemes are involved, and the third person gets zero-expression:

² The form **kui-he-ça-ça-ky* is ungrammatical.

- (10) *wa'dy-ta-kywy wa'dy-da-tsy-tse*
give-1O-COND give-1S-POT-DEC
'if he gives me (the lighter) I'll give him (the pen)'
- (11) *e'kai dwỹ-le'te tso'roi=ε-ki açy-'na*
leg break-CONC run=go-DEC house-LOC
'though having broken his leg he went home running'

There is also a 'mood' marker which is semantically more abstract and which serves to link clauses which are both subordinated and coordinated. I regard such clauses as medial clauses and I have called the form 'cosubordinative'. The following examples show how the cosubordinative mood marker seems to take on the semantic value of the matrix mood marker:

- (12) *çyi'ni waia'nỹ-da-ki hado-'nã-da-ta*
needle bring-1S-DEC pierce-FUT-1S-CSO
'I brought a needle to pierce'
- (13) *tsuhũ-'du-da-ta ha'do-da-re*
what-BER-1S-CSO pierce-1S-INT
'why did I pierce it?'
- (14) *ca'ri-da-ta 'jo-da-mỹ*
shoot-1S-CSO devour-1S-VOL
'I'm going to shoot and devour him!'

Especially in traditional stories, clause chains can become very long. They involve many medial clauses, and often only one matrix mood occurs, which is at the end of the story. If subjects of the subsequent medial clauses change, or if the medial clause subject differs from that of the matrix clause subject, this has to be expressed. When the different subjects are both third persons, a special different subject marker *-dy-* is inserted:

- (15) *'tswa-wã 'mẽ-ta e'mã-ki*
man-AO beat-CSO cry-DEC
'(the woman) beat the man and (she) cried'
- (16) *e'tay tswa-'wã 'mẽ-dy-ta e'mã-ki tswa*
woman man-AO beat-DS-CSO cry-DEC man
'the woman beat the man and the man cried'

When one of the different subjects is a non-third person, a special 'switch reference mood' form is used:

- (17) *'kwε-da-ta* *atxixi-'nũ* *'ja-da-ki*
enter-1S-CSO maize-porridge eat-1S-DEC
'I entered and ate maize porridge'
- (18) *'kwε-da-si* *ho'Beto* *atxixi-'nũ* *wa'dy-ta-ki*
enter-1S-SWR Roberto maize-porridge give-1O-DEC
'I entered and Roberto gave me maize porridge'

4.2. Verbal derivation

Negation, valency and valency change, and tense, modality and aspect are also marked by a wide array of verbal morphemes. These are optional, and they are probably derivational in nature rather than inflectional. Some morphemes of modality may be etymologically related to mood markers, such as the causational morpheme *-nĩ-* and the exhortative mood marker *-ni*. Compare the following example to (7):

- (19) *hadai-'nĩ-da-ki*
hack-CAUS-1S-DEC
'I cut myself (by accident)'

Verbs can be turned into nouns or adverbs by the highly multifunctional stem-final nominalizing morphemes *-hỹ* and *-nãi*. Furthermore, Kwaza has two large subsets of derivational morphemes; classifiers and directionals. In certain respects, classifiers can be regarded as nominalizers with an anaphoric faculty. This will be discussed below in section 5.

4.3. Nouns

In contrast to verbal morphology, nominal morphology in Kwaza is not very complex. There is no number or gender inflection. Nouns may receive animate object case marking, as in example (4), or one of the oblique case markers: instrumental, locative as in example (11), beneficiary and comitative. Nouns can be verbalized by mere attachment of (person and) mood marking:

- (20) *e'tay-ki*
woman-DEC
'it is a woman'

Obviously, nouns can be morphologically very complex if they result from nominalized inflected verbs. In Kwaza, pronouns, demonstratives and numerals are all considered as nouns.

5. Attributive constructions, classifiers and nominalization

Kwaza has no separate category of adjectives. Attributive modification of nouns is realized by juxtaposition with other nouns:

(21) *ywy'nwỹ* *duma'ru*
tree ladle
'big wooden stirring spoon'

(22) *da'mũ* *tswa*
duck man
'male duck'

However, most lexemes which have an attributive semantic content are bound verbal roots. In order for them to be used attributively, they have to be nominalized first:

(23) *ka'nwã* *aky-'hỹ*
boat two-NOM
'two boats'

In fact, many semantically attributive roots cannot even be used predicatively unless they are first nominalized by *-hỹ*. The root **aky* 'two' does not occur independently, and the verb form **akyki* 'there are two' is ungrammatical as well. A nominalizer is required in all circumstances: *aky-'hỹ* 'two (things)' and *aky-'hỹ-ki* 'there are two (things)'. The possessive is expressed through a combination of possessive derivation and nominalization, and through attributive-like juxtaposition with a head:

(24) *'si-dy-hỹ* *ecũ'ri*
I-POS-NOM buttock
'my buttock'

Note here that **si-dy-ki* 'it is mine' and **si-dy* 'mine' are also ungrammatical. These notions should be expressed as *si-dy-'hỹ-ki* 'it is mine' and *'si-dy-hỹ* 'mine, my one', respectively. The latter form also suggests that the head of a modifying construction can be omitted. The nominalizer *-hỹ* is highly productive. In fact, entire clauses can be nominalized. This implies among other things that there is no sharp division between attributive constructions and relative clauses:

(25) *ay-'hỹ* *e'hỹ-ça-'hỹ*
that-NOM do-2-NOM
'that which you did'

(26) *jere'çwa* *eto'hoi* *ka'he-hỹ* *a'wỹi-da-ki*
jaguar child bite-NOM see-1S-DEC
'I saw the child which was bitten by the dog'³

(27) *dutu're* *ũ'kai-ty-hata-'hỹ* *a'wỹi-da-hỹ-ki*
pig lie-DET-3S.2O-NOM see-1S-NOM-DEC
'I saw that pig which laid down in your (hammock)'

³ The use of the word for 'jaguar' has been extended to the concept 'dog'.

As it appears from the discussions following examples (23) and (24), the head of attributive constructions can be omitted when it is already understood from the context by the hearer. Similarly, the head of the relative clause construction can be omitted in the proper context:

- (28) *a'wỹi-da-hỹ-ki* (*tswa*) *'mẽ-hata-hỹ*
see-1S-NOM-DEC man hit-3S.2O-NOM
'I saw that one (man) who beat you'

Another important aspect of nominalization and attributive modification is the role of classifiers. Kwaza has a large number of classifying morphemes, which 'agree', so to say, with small groups of specific nouns. In some cases there is an etymological relationship between a noun and its classifier, such as *a'çy* 'house' and *-çy* 'straw, house'. Classifiers have a very wide distribution. They can be attached to bare nouns, incorporated into verb stems, they can modify adverbs, and they can occur in the place of nominalizers. Remember that the possessive construction involves a nominalizer and compare the following examples:

- (29) *tawi'wi-dy-hỹ* *a'çy*
Tawiwi-POS-NOM house
'Tawiwi's house'
- (30) *tawi'wi-dy-çy*
Tawiwi-POS-house
'Tawiwi's house'

Compare the following examples also to (23):

- (31) (*a'çy*) *aky-'çy*
house two-house
'two houses'
- (32) *aky-'day-tse*
two-snake-DEC
'there are two snakes'
- (33) *haka-'çy*
old-house
'old house'
- (34) *ha'ka-jãhỹ*
old-path
'old path'

From these examples it appears that if a specific classifier is applied, the head of an attributive construction can be omitted without, in plain words, any loss of meaning

altogether. This suggests that classifiers have properties which are comparable to those of verbal agreement morphemes, the anaphoric faculty of which enables pro-drop. However, these properties of classifiers depend heavily on the specific environment in which they occur, and are not as productive as those of cross-reference morphemes. Furthermore, specific classifiers cannot replace the nominalizer in complex nominalized clauses such as (27). This is all discussed in detail in Van der Voort (2000). The above discussion implies that the element *-hỹ*, apart from being a nominalizer, may also be analysed as a classifier of neutral semantic content.

6. Relations with other languages

Kwaza is an unclassified language, and so far no strong evidence has been put forward which could confirm whether Kwaza is genetically related or not to any other known language. Nevertheless, there are indications for linguistic relationships with neighbouring languages. There are some structural similarities which can be regarded as areal features. As an example, both Kwaza, Kanoê and Aikanã appear to have classifiers. And with the Tupi languages, Kwaza shares the inclusive vs. exclusive distinction in subject reference. But the most striking evidence is lexical. In the list below, a number of cognates with other languages are presented. The fact that there are hardly any systematic phonological differences between these cognates, which would point to a development through time, suggests that they are borrowings. The long history of contact between the various peoples of Rondônia has resulted in cultural similarities, hence the occurrence of linguistic similarities may not be surprising. Note about the following list that Kwaza, Kanoê and Aikanã are unclassified languages, and Akũtsũ, Koaratira and Mekens are Tuparí languages. The material from Kwaza, Kanoê, Aikanã and Akũtsũ is mainly from my own fieldwork. Some Kanoê material is from Bacelar (1996), the Koaratira material is from Becker-Donner (1955) and the Mekens material is from Galucio (1996).

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	<i>KWAZA</i>	<i>KANOÊ</i>	<i>AIKANĀ</i>	<i>AKŪTSŪ</i>	<i>KOARATIRA</i>	<i>MEKENS</i>
annatto	to'ro	târá	tará			
armadillo	haru'rai		ha'rö			
arrow	mã'bi	mampi	pa'ʔi	mãm'bi	mãpi	mampi
axe	a'le		aj're			
banana	apa'ra		dipara	α'para	ãpara	apãra
basket	ururi're		u'ruri			
chicken	kuraku'ra	kurakura	kura'ru	kura'kura	kōrākōrá	
cockroach	kawa'pe				áwapã	ewape
duck	da'mũ	tæ'mun				
EMPHatic	-tete-	-kete-				te(te)
fire	hi	iní	hi'ne			
hand	tso'je	it'so/iko'so				
head	tso'ty	iku'ta				
hive	ha'ço		a'zu			
house	a'cy	a'so/a'tso			ẽ'tsĩ	
Indian	akũ'cũ	akũ'tsũ	akũ'sũ			
intestine	emjākã			i:mẽ'git		
jacamim	aratsa'by	arata'py		aratapí		aratawy
LIQuid	-mũ	-mũ	-mũ			
liver	e'ri	i'ry	i:'ri?			
LOCative	-na	-nĩ	-ne			
macaw	a'wy	awa	awa			
maize	atxi'txi	atití	hak'i	ati'ti	atsitsĩ	atsitsi
moon	haku'ri					pakuri
POWder	-nũ	-nun				
monkey	hy'ri	yry				
pig	dutu're	ura'yra	e'rwe			
clearing	to'wy				tawüt'	tabyt
sieve ⁴	mana'ry	manaré	ma'nare		pananã	
sleep	wãwỹ-		awĩwã-			
star	waruwaru	warywa'ry			paruwaru	waruwaru
stone	ha'ki	a'ki	ha'zi	ka'ʔi		
sun	ko'sa	kwi'kaj			keakōp	
tapir	ãrũ		arũ'me	arẽ'ja		
water	hã	one/kunĩ	ha'ne	i'ni		
woman	e'tay		detia		otã' (daughter)	
yam	akwa'mã				ákòámã	akwama

⁴ This form is probably borrowed from an Arawakan language.

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Abbreviations

AO	Animate object	LOC	Locative case
AS	Associated person	NEG	Negative
BER	Beneficiary	NEI	Negative imperative
CAUS	Causational modality	NOM	Nominalizer
CONC	Concessive	PL	Plural
COND	Conditional	POS	Possessive
CSO	Cosubordination	POT	Potential
DEC	Declarative	SWR	Switch reference mood
DET	Detrimental	VOL	Volitive
DS	Different subject	1O	1st person object
EXH	Exhortative	1P	1st person plural
FUT	Future	1S	1st person singular
IMP	Imperative	2	2nd person
INT	Interrogative	3S.2O	3rd person subject/ 2nd person object
IS	Indefinite subject		