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THE ENGLISH-FRENCH SIDE OF THE WORDLIST

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0. Introduction

My present involvement with comparative Gur matters is the pre-classificatory work of identifying languages (Naden 1986, Naden MS, Naden, P./J.Schaefer MS) and clarifying nomenclature (Naden 1989), and the long-term project of preparing a comparative dictionary of the Western Oti/Volta languages. My reasoning is that we have an adequate framework for classification on the basis of the work of Swadesh *et al.* (1966) and Manessy (1969, 1971, 1975, 1979) - summarised in Naden 1989 - and in spite of increasing sophistication of analytical techniques (*e.g.* Schadeberg 1986) we cannot make further progress without fuller and more reliable data from the languages.

In the course of the dictionary work, I am of course working mostly with bilingual wordlists, glossaries, vocabularies and dictionaries (Naden 1993) of the Gur languages. For comparative purposes one has to go from the English or French¹ word to the Gur language, because we want to know what term the various languages use for, for instance, “bone”, rather than the referent of the, say, Dagbani word **kɔbili**. This is a specialized form of lexicography which has requirements quite different from those of dictionaries designed for outsiders wanting to learn or interpret the Gur language, while there are different needs again for speakers of the Gur language wishing to learn or interpret English or French. This note concerns problems which I as a user encounter in the glossing practices of my sources, and to which I may therefore usefully alert the compilers of such bilingual vocabularies. The material is drawn from an attempt to make a glossary to help bilingual lexicographers in this area (in both the geographical and the operational sense of the word)².

1. Problems to be Addressed

This note is offered as an aid to accurate compilation and use of the International language (IL) side (specifically French and English¹) of bilingual lexical compilations of West African languages (Afr.L). The reasons why such a thing seems necessary are :-

a) The alternation of anglophone and francophone countries in West Africa (with americophone Liberia and lusophone Guinea-Bissau thrown in for good measure) means that any African language spoken in the sphere of one IL will certainly have relatives, and may have co-dialects or extensions of its own

speech-community, in the area of another. Researchers therefore need to be able to use materials from the IL(/s) other than that in which they usually work.

b) Many researchers whose native- or first working- language is English are working in francophone countries, and the reverse is also true, though in fewer cases.

c) Many referents in the vocabularies of the Afr.Ls are not internationally-known, and the locally-used IL words (e.g. 'pito', 'rosella', 'soukhala') are often not in published dictionaries which have metropolitan/international focus. Related problems are where the correct gloss may not mean much to the researcher³ - the non-zoologist, e.g., may know that given antelope names mean "kob", "oribi", and "duiker" without any idea what distinguishes these beasties. Indeed in this generation where increasing human populations and availability of guns to hunters have decimated wildlife we have the tantalizing situation where many speakers of these African languages know a lot of names - and, where bilingual, often the English or French names - of animals which they have never seen and would not recognise if they did. It will be interesting to see what happens in succeeding generations: - whether the names become forgotten or legendary (I still wonder what were the **bɔnitara** in a Bisa story I recorded in 1968, which the teller insisted were "bears"), or whether technological communications developments will reach even these areas with information content on these creatures, as western youngsters learn of wildlife through books, television, zoos and computers.

d) As a result of b) and c) we find, for instance, native-speakers of English who know the French word, but not the English, for something they talk about every day. Note also that, to take one case, some English-language economic reports list 'karite' as an export of francophone West African countries (and probably think of it as pronounced 'care-right!'), without knowing that there is an English term, "shea-butter" (see Dalgish 1982, s.v.).

e) There are also distinctive usages of IL words which have become institutionalised amongst speakers of the Afr.Ls; these often become automatic for expatriates spending significant time in the area. They include arbitrary re-assignments of meaning like 'wolf' for "hyæna" in anglophone areas, or 'caïman' for "crocodile" in francophone countries⁴. Note also the problem of gorillas in the Burkinabe Sahel - Naden 1985, p.77. There are in addition special usages reflecting the semantic structure of the Afr.L - such as the use of 'keep long' for "to be late, be a long time in starting to do or doing something, be long-lasting" - corresponding to the W.O/V lexical item with an underlying form like *YU-G- (e.g. Mampruli **yuui**), or extending the sense of 'follow' to include "accompany", like *DOL- (MP **n-dɔli**). We further find arbitrary survivals of the old pigins like 'chop' for "eat" or 'dash' for "give a present, discount".

f) In addition to the features of African French, Ghana English, and the like as presented in e), further misunderstandings may occur as a result of the differences between British, American and Australian English, and between the French of France, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada.

2. General Lexicographic Considerations

A further problem which is relevant here, though not specific to Africa, French or English, is inherent in the nature of the simple IL-to-target-language wordlists we are envisaging here. This arises from the desideratum of furnishing a simple gloss in the IL listing, and one which the user might be expected to look up if in search of the corresponding Afr.L term given. To take an extreme example, most users of English, however long-established in West Africa, will look up the verb for the consumption of food under "eat", and will be rightly aggrieved if it is only listed under 'chop'. An avoidable but easily-committed lapse is the use of an ambiguous gloss - 'can' ("tin-can", or "be able"?), 'bouton' ("button", "bud", or "pimple" - see Naden 1985). Criteria may be in tension: a neat semantic match may not be the item most users would look up - for instance my observation of the appropriateness of the American English (Am.) 'fix' as a gloss for the W.O/V

*MA(A)L- which means both “make” and “mend”, as in ‘fix breakfast’ and ‘fix a flat (tire)’. No British (Br.) or Common (C.E) English term has this coverage, while the Fr. “faire” has a different extension (“make” and “do” - “mend” needs “refaire”); however “attach firmly” is probably the only sense for which most users, even Americans, would look up “fix”.

Other concerns are general considerations of (bilingual) lexicography. These include the question of word-class: English particularly has many noun/verb homophonous pairs. The primary choice is between entry formats like “convict, to” / “convict, a”, and the insertion of grammatical labels like “[n.]”, “[v.]”, in the lemmata⁵. A related case is that where the part of speech of the IL word which is semantically most appropriate does not match that of the Afr.L term: this happens commonly in the case of descriptive and other stative verbs in Gur languages which correspond rather to adjectives or adverbs in ILs. “red, to be/become” and “red [v.]” are both awkward, but some such convention seems needed. It might be better to indicate the wordclass of the Afr.L item, either in all cases or only where it is different from that of the IL gloss. This latter question of consistency *versus* redundancy appears elsewhere - for instance, do all English verb entries have a “---, to” form, or only those which have a homonymous noun?

Where multi-word lemma glosses are unavoidable, there is the problem of getting the word the user is most likely to look up into the alphabetized ‘pole position’ - awkward locutions like “dye, tree whose bark yields a red”, “put (something) inside (a narrow container), to” are only too easy to produce. Some computer record-ordering programs can now alphabetize on a tagged non-initial word in a phrase - “tree whose bark yields a red *dye” will be alphabetized under “dye”. This has advantages, but the program concerned has to be able to do all the processing we want to perform on the glossary, because if we then load it into another program it may get reordered on the first word in linear order. Whether from this effect or just compilers’ thoughtlessness, I have recently had to wrestle with lists which start off with a big batch of entries starting “a certain...”, “a kind of...”, “a type of...”, and with all the verbs alphabetized under “to...” and “to be...”. The use of “[type]” or “[sp.]” after the general term is a better way of dealing with nouns for which there is no - or we don’t know the - specific term, but we know the general category to which it belongs (“tool”, “animal”, “tree”, &c.). With verbs we also have the question of Afr.L words which imply a particular subject or object: I use a convention where these, and other similar refining items are in parentheses (contrasting with the square brackets representing grammatical categories) - “mend (net, string bag)”, “condemn (formally, in court)”. This may extend to the use of “(somebody)” or “(something)” (“sb.”/“sth.”) to represent arguments, as in the “put inside” example above, as an alternative to using grammatical “[trans.]” and “[intrans.]”. Any solution may have pitfalls - someone who offered to type a list for me for duplicating (‘mimeograph’ (Am.), “*polycopie*”) carefully expanded all my “sb.” notations to ‘subject’ instead of “somebody”!

The need to maximize both compactness and clarity which is very important in lexicography leads to the careful and consistent use of symbolization. A lot of mileage (?kilometrage?) can be obtained from the use of fonts or styles (bold, italic and so on) and various bracketings including English single and double quotes, guillemets, and dashes. A useful symbol if typographically available is the ‘swung dash’ - ~+ - which can stand for the entry word in examples and discussion. An example of the sort of convention that I am accustomed to use can be seen in 1.e above; the ‘target’ (Afr. in this case) language keyword and citations are in bold face, double quotes enclose an English translation equivalent, gloss or definition⁶: this is in the case of words mentioned, rather than used, in an English-language discussion; in an Afr.L/English wordlist the Eng. could be unmarked (thus freeing the quotes for another function). Single quotes are used for some sort of special English usage, a dialect (especially Afr. Eng.), a coinage of my own, or a technical use of a term (as in ‘swung dash’ and ‘target’ earlier in this paragraph. Underlining indicates other languages (French and other IL equivalents, French and Latin tags and abbreviations conventionally used in English, like déjà vu and e.g.). Where the basic list is Afr.L/French the assignment of conventions to English and French would of course be reversed. In the text of the encyclopaedic listing in this project we use italic for scientific species-name Latin and this information has a special status here. Square brackets are used for grammatical information, so Dagbani **dimbɔŋɔ** could be glossed “this” or [dem.], and **o** as “he” or [pron. 3rd. sing.]. I am not urging these specific conventions for everyone to follow, but illustrating the sort of practice which it is helpful to follow. Whatever system is adopted should be followed with rigorous consistency in any single

publication (or unpublished database or set of databases. It helps in maintaining consistency for an individual scholar or a cooperating team to use the same conventions throughout their work.

Some of these problems arise specifically from the limitations of alphabetization as an organizing device. A thesaurus or similar semantically-organized listing would obviate the problems of ambiguity, for instance (“can” under “Domestic Containers”, for instance, could not be “able”). I am at present planning to use semantic organization for my W.O/V compilation. Such a work still needs an alphabetical index, however, so it does not make the considerations here irrelevant. An intermediate level of use of semantic criteria would be to avoid the problem of part of speech by having an IL alphabetic entry for the semantic category, with sub-entries for syntactic variants : “RED - red [adj.], - make red - become red - red [adv./ideoph.] ...”

3. This Project

It is therefore desirable to strive conciously to eliminate the confusion arising from these sources which hampers the collection, publication circulation and use of lexical materials, at any level, in the West African languages.

The ideal for a detailed guidebook such as one would eventually like to see is to provide for vocabulary which is purely West African, either in reference or usage, both an ordinary-language explanation and suggested English and French glosses suitable for a bilingual wordlist or dictionary. It is also relevant to draw attention to and explicate problems likely to arise (and, in many cases, having in my own experience arisen) from dialect differences within the ILs, and certain less-obvious ambiguities in the ILs and the means that have been, or may be, used to resolve them.

My pilot project, from which a sample is reproduced below, has a structure based on encyclopædic entries in English (as we envisage at present more English-speaking researchers using French than *vice versa* - and to do it both ways would take more time and space), with plentiful cross-references from English words that users might come across or think of using. There is also (sample below is all so far printed⁷) a full alphabetic listing of French words.

To use this compilation as currently designed, you should look up an unfamiliar word that you have encountered in either language and follow the cross-reference chain until satisfied that enough is known about its meaning to understand/use it properly. In order to speak or write about something of which the name is known in one language, it can be looked up in order to find the (an) equivalent in the other. Equivalences which should be in a medium-quality/size English-French/French-English dictionary are not listed unless needed as cross-references or cover-terms. Browsing in the listings may alert researchers to potential problems in terms they find, or intend to use, as glosses.

An important set of conventions is used in the French side. The notation:

FR. : ENG *q.v.*

is used to mean that the French and English words can be used as glosses of each other, but further useful information may be found under the English word.

FR. : *v.* ENG

is used to mean that in order to gloss this French word it will be necessary to consult the discussion under the English word. Thus an English speaker encountering Fr. “*bouc*” and not knowing its meaning will probably find the gloss “he-goat, billy-goat” sufficient⁸. But anyone finding or wanting to use “*boîte*” should not do so without consulting the entries for “box” and/or “can” as either or neither of these might be appropriate glosses. It is also worth noting that a researcher working in the IL less-familiar to him/her might usefully check these lists in case the Afr. helper has explained an item with an ambiguous term of which

she/he is not aware - thus avoiding the mistaken assumption that **kunkɔŋ** - *boîte* means “box” when it is really “tin can”, or that **n-tooi** - “can” means *boîte* when it is really *pouvoir*.

I attempt to warn wherever there is any reason to *avoid* a particular form. In addition I aim to give some motivated guidance as to which alternatives are preferable where several possibilities remain. In general I advise the use of British English and metropolitan French rather than other dialects of these ILs, as these forms are more likely to be known and accepted in former colonies. For use in Liberia it may be necessary to give priority to Am.Eng, except in cases of extra ambiguity (“bug”, “tortoise”). In some cases Am. derives a term for a tropical item from Spanish America, and the Fr. also comes from Sp., while the Br. with their own early explorations have a different term (as in “cutlass”, “pawpaw” vs. ‘machete’/*machète*, ‘papaya’/*papaye*). The only reverse case I know is Am. ‘corn’ vs. “maize”/*maïs*. In some cases it may be appropriate to use an Afr.Eng./Fr. term in a compilation for local use, though the international equivalent should be added with a cross-reference (“diviner” see ‘soothsayer’).

4. Specimen Listings

[The published paper had a selection of the English entries and a sample page of the French; this version has the full English Aardvark - Zorilla]

ABBREVIATIONS

Afk.	Afrikaans
Afr.	Africa(n)
ambig.	ambiguous
Am.	America(n (English))
anat.	anatomical, referring to body-part/-function
Ar.	Arabic
bot.	botanical
Br.	Britain, British (English)
Can.	Canada, Canadian (English)
C.E	Common English or “general”, “international” – English which would not be considered specifically British, American, or whatever
Eng.	English
Fr.	France, French
f.a.	faux ami(s) – word/s in Fr. and Eng. which look alike but are not equivalents
Gen.	general
Gh.	Ghana (-English)
Ha.	Hausa

Lat.	Latin
lgg.	languages
lg.	language
NL	Dutch Netherlands
obs.	obsolete old fashioned, archaic
ornith.	ornithological to do with birds
Port.	Portuguese
Sp.	Spanish
sp.	species type, sort, kind of
spp.	species ([pl.]) types, sorts, kinds of
Sw.	Swiss
W.Afr.	West Africa(n)
X-ref.	cross-reference
v.	<i>vide</i> (see ...)
<	(1) derived from : 2) or, better,
>	rather than [A > B = 'A rather than B']
*	this form has an entry in the English section
[adj.]	adjective
[f.]	feminine noun
[m.]	masculine noun
[n.]	noun
[pl.]	plural
[v.]	verb

ENGLISH/French VOCABULARY

aardvark

animal beloved of lexicographers because it always comes first in alphabetical order! Large burrowing anteater. May be called 'earth-donkey' in the vernacular (has big ears) or local Eng./Fr.: has even been called (Gh.) 'kangaroo' (shape of head, large hindquarters).

Orycteropus afer

orycterope

cochon de terre

'earth-pig' (= "aardvark" (Afk.))

fourmilier

= "anteater" (but both these terms are usually used for new-world/australasian creatures}

"*pangolin"

abdomen

"*belly"

abuse [v.]

"*insult"

aca

"*millet"

ackee apple

big tree with red, fleshy fruits (shiny, black, ?poisonous?) seeds inside)

term is Caribbean

Blighia sapida

finzan

'adobe'

"*mortar (2)"

Am.

adze

hatchet, chopper with edge at right angles to handle (like a hoe) : used cutting towards operator

l'herminette

[f.]

"*axe"

Lexinote 13 (forthc.)

agama

lizard with hard scales, 10-30cm., diurnal. Local Eng./Fr., lgg., may treat large dominant males (dark blue with orange head) as different species from females and juniors (brownish).

margouillat(-agame)

"*lizard"

agouti

"*grasscutter"

agusi

"*egusi"

'airtight'

"*box"

Gh.

akala, akara

"*bean-cake"

'akpeteshie'

"*pito"

Gh.

alkali

"*spice-water"

C.E = 'lye' (Am.)

alligator

"*crocodile"

amulet

a small magical-protective device, worn 'for luck' – a "charm" (but this is too general) or "talisman" (?too specific?)

amulette?

talisman?

'gri(s)-gri(s)'

? too general?

"*fetish"

"*medicine"

anteater

"*aardvark"

antelope

expect different names for different species, no general term; be as specific as possible:

'deer' (no real deer in Africa)

antilope

'daim'

antelope : ... entries following
note English spelling!

antelope : bongo

largish, stripy, forest

Boocercus euryceros

bongo

antelope : bushbuck

medium-small, stripes all over, big ears, prong horns
Tragelaphus scriptus
guib harnaché

antelope : chevrotain (water--)

very small, fat body, in water near coast
Hyemoschus aquaticus
chevrotain (aquatique)

antelope : dorcas gazelle

small, slim, desert
Gazella dorcas
gazelle dorcas

antelope : duiker

small, compact, single-spike horns
Cephalophus spp.
céphalophe : many types

antelope : eland, giant

large, cow-like, Sahel
Taurotragus derbianus
élan(d) de Derby

antelope : gazelle

small, slim
Gazella spp.
gazelle
“*antelope : dorcas” / “*red-fronted g.”
may be used in Afr. E./Fr. for other species, antelope in general

antelope : hartebeest

largish, U-shaped horns, long face, back slopes down
Alcelaphus busephalus
bubale

antelope : kob

medium, slim, S-shaped horns
Adenota kob
kob(a), cobe

antelope : korrigum

heavyish, dark patches on front
Damaliscus korrigum
damalisque

antelope : oribi

small, thin, big ears, straight horns
Ourebia ourebi
ourébi

antelope : red-fronted gazelle

small, slim, reddish, dark side-stripe, Savanna
Gazella rufifrons
gazelle à front rouge
“*antelope : gazelle”

antelope : reedbuck

small, reddish, short hooked horns
Redunca redunca
redunca
nagor
cobe des roseaux

antelope : roan

large, heavy, curved horns (‘horse-like’ according to Lat./Fr.!)
Hippotragus equinus
hippotrague
antilope cheval

antelope : sitatunga

medium, dark brown stripes, forest
Tragelaphus spekei
sitatunga
guib d’eau

antelope : waterbuck

medium size, horns curve forwards
Kobs defassa
daim
cobe défassa
cobe onctueux
Fr. daim may be used for antelopes in general

antelope

“*antelope”
spelling mistake, or French

antimony

“*make-up”

anus

“*bottom (2)”

apple

“*ackee apple”

appointment

an agreed meeting
rendezvous
better (as non-ambig. alternative for:
“*date (2)”
“*engagement (5)”

ass

donkey ‘ass’ (Am.) for “*bottom” (anat.) is mildly obscene – avoid!

aubergine

“*bitter-tomato’ ; ‘*garden-egg’

aunt

uncle (!)

ax
axe
Am. spelling

axe
hatchet, chopper with cutting edge parallel to handle
la hache
“*adze”

baboon
stocky ape with doglike head
Papio anubis cheras
cynocephale
babouin
seems to be a f.a. not used for this sp.- locally, the met.Fr. is *babouin (doguera)*
Afr. lg. may include ‘dog-’ in name

baboon: Western
smaller, reddish, in Fouta Djallon area
Papio p.
babouin de Guinée

baby, have a ~
“*birth, to give ~”

back (lower)
“*waist”

bag
“*sack”

baggage
“*load”

Bambar(r)a bean
an underground-fruited legume, similar to *groundnut, but seeds very hard and spherical; Afr. lg. may have same word for both, this one may be distinguished as ‘round-’ and/or the groundnut as ‘oil-’
Voandzeia subterranea
pois (souterrain/de terre)
voandzou
“*groundnut”
also ‘Bambarra-(ground-)nut’

baobab
tree with fat trunk (contains water): Leaves used in soup.
baobab
“*baobab fruit”

baobab fruit
Large oval pods of “*baobab”, hard shell can be split to reveal black seeds in white sweetish acidulous powder
pain des singes
Eng. equivalent “monkey-bread” may be heard.

barrel
“*can”

basin
“*pot”

bat
in wordlist is likely to be “~, flying mouse” > “~, games equipment”! – this is a small, insectivorous one
Pipistrellus, spp.
chauve souris
pipistrelle
“*bat, fruit-~”
if you also have a stick used in a game you might have to make a distinction of lemmata like “bat (animal)” / “bat, club (used in --- game)”

bat, fruit-~
large hammerheaded bat, flying-fox
Hypsignathus monstrosus
roussette

Bauhinia
tree with double-oval leaves used for wrapping foods for cooking
Bauhinia [sp.]
Bauhinia
used in wordlists ?? any Eng. or Fr. name ?? one variety
bauhinia rufescens – ‘camel’s foot tree’, ‘mountain ebony’

beam
- heavy, horizontal member in building (also width of a boat – and, humorously, a person’s “*bottom (2)”) – but this won’t arise except in specialist studies of local boat-building).
poutre

bean
(Br.) an oval legume, spherical ones are ‘peas’ (Fr. *pois*, the normal European type are not in this area). Am. calls many such beans ‘pea’, including the common white bean of W.Afr., Am. ‘black-eyed pea’, also called by agriculturalists, nutritionists “cowpea”: this is the referent of W.Afr. ‘beans’ (pron. ‘beence’)/ *haricot*. May be different terms for different colours (reddish, purple-black) even if botanists say they are the same species. There may be soybeans as recent introduction. *Vigna sinensis* is the cowpea
haricot

?? specific Fr. term for cowpea ??
other legumes “*Bambar(r)a bean”, “*groundnut”

bean-cake
batter made from ground “*bean”s (may include chopped onion), deep-fried in balls : ‘koosi’ (Ha.), ‘akara’, ‘akala’
beignet de haricot

bear [n.]
no animals of this genus in Africa – ?? what is meant by

local use of this term ??

Ursus [spp.]

ours

?? is this used in .Afr ? – for what??

“*birth, to give ~”

beer

Commercial brewery beer may be known in towns and called by Eng./Fr. name ‘biiya’, _(du)beeri_ ; possibly Hausa _giiya_

bière

“*pito” (local home-brew)

belly

used to be considered too earthy for polite Br., some lists use “stomach” [“tummy” is childish, “abdomen” is med.] Local lg. may distinguish internal organ from external body-area, or upper and lower etc.

estomac, ventre

(?exact usage?) – *bas ventre* is “*pubic” area.

The stomach and ‘innards’ as taken out of a carcass are in normal Eng. “entrails” (*entrailles* ?Stylistic level?) – the technical butchers’ term is “*pluck”: wordlists usually use “guts” (impolite for Br., also means “courage”), or “intestines”

boyaux, intestins

*pregnancy

benniseed, benne(seed)

“*sesame”

bill (1)

‘(treasury) bill’ (Am.) = “(bank)note” (Br.)

billet (de banque)

bill (2)

“bill” (Br.) = ‘tab’ (Am.) – reckoning of charges, especially for meals, &c.

addition (restaurant) ; note (hôtel) ; compte facture

billfold

“*sack”

billy-goat

male goat

bouc

birth, to give ~

Anglo-Saxon prudery has deprived Eng. of a normal verb for a female producing offspring. The daily-life term is “have a baby”; “bear” is obsolete (and ambiguous – *q.v.*, but also = “carry” and “tolerate” – *supporter*), though “be born” for the child is O.K.: “give birth” may be best, with Xrefs from “birth”, “born”, “bear”? : Gh ‘bring forth’ is also obs. though might also need a Xref for Ghana use. In Afr.L the same word may be used for the father’s part (‘beget’ obs. – totally unlexifiable in modern Eng.!). Animals may have special terms in Eng. “calve”, “farrow”..., but Afr.L probably all the same

enfanter (esp. human) ; mettre bas (esp. animals) ; *accoucher ; donner naissance ; naître*

For the offspring of humans or animals

“*pregnancy”

bitch

“*dog”

‘bitter-tomato’

a sort of eggplant (*‘garden-egg’) resembling green, lobed tomato, sometimes eaten raw

Lat ??

Fr??

one list has

aubergine indigène ; tomate amère in LexPro Bambara

or is this *‘garden-egg’? (even two languages as close as MP and DB, MP ‘bitter-tomato’ = DB ‘garden-egg’

(**kama**)

*‘garden-egg’

black (person)

Gh. for African of darker colouring. Am. OK for negroid racial type, Br. derogatory for negroid or non-caucasian.

(un(e)) noir

*‘coloured’

boat

We might as well use this general term unless there are several local types. “canoe” means the open, skin-on-frame, Canadian type in Am., Can., the closed kayak in Br. : use in lists is presumably derogatory – ‘primitive boat’.

pirogue is usually used in lists for the common W.Afr

dugout or thick-planked boat

bateau any reason why not?

usually driven by a “*paddle”

boil (1)

method of cooking

“*cook (v.)”

boil (2)

water is “at a rolling boil” – [intrans.] : may gloss “be boiling”, or (“boiling, be”), “boil [intrans.]”, or “boil (water does)” {_vs._ “boil, cook ~s sth.”}

bouillir

same trans./intrans. problem as Eng.

boil (3)

infected swelling, not from a wound : “whitlow” is unambiguous but may be dialectal (I first heard it from Americans, but some Br. seem to use it) and not the thing you look up: gloss “boil, whitlow” to disambiguate, or “boil (sore) see whitlow”

furuncle

born (to be -)

“*birth, to give ~”

bottle

Container for liquids, usually with a narrow neck.
 Unmarked, a glass bottle will usually be thought of, but may be plastic, ceramic or calabash- : same word may be used for glass as a substance.
 “*jug”; “*glass”

bottom (1)

“bottom, underpart of something”, needs to be distinguished from (2)
fond; dessous
 this is also “below, beneath, under”: suitable if local word has both senses

bottom (2)

euphemism for fleshy part of the posterior, “buttocks”
fesses
 childish “behind”, “backside”
derrière
 impolite Br. “bum”, Am. “butt”; obscene Br. “arse”, Am. “ass” (see also “donkey”)
cul
 Can use euphemism if qualified: “bottom”/ *derrière* (anat.)’. are convenient glosses if the local language combines senses (1) and (2) (note that locative meanings of the Eng. and Fr. are different); “buttock/s”, *fesse(s)* are convenient if local word refers to one ‘cheek’, pl. for whole posterior. Aperture of bowel is “anus” Eng./Fr. (“rectum” is med. for the internal passage: euph. “back-passage”)

bowl

“*pot”

box

Locally-carpentered wooden boxes with a top-opening lid are a common item for storage and transportation. Gh. ‘chop-box’ (for keeping ‘chop’, food, and other personal items, esp. at boarding school. Another standard item is the metal trunk, used for similar purposes, Gh. ‘airtight’ (? Fr.) – use “box, wooden” and “trunk (metal)”.
boîte but this is ambiguous with ‘tin-can’
 “*can”: see also “*load”

bribe

“*dash”

bride (-groom)

“*marriage”

bring forth (Gh.)

“*birth”

broil

“*cook”

brother

“*sibling”

buck

types of “*antelope”
 antelope
 not f.a., *bouc* – “billy-goat”

buffalo

the black water buffalo or ‘wild-/bush-cow’
Syncerus caffer
buffle
S. c. nanus
 “dwarf forest buffalo”(smaller, reddish colouration)

bug

Used by Am. as a gen. “creepy-crawlie” term (some even include frogs, snakes). Better to use “insect” or specific species.
insecte
 insect, weevil, cockroach
 Entomologists use “bug” for *hemiptera* – not bees, beetles, butterflies, ants, moths ...

burlap

sack

bush (a)

small tree or shrub
arbuste, buisson
 may not be a local lexeme

bush (the) (1)

Land outside settlements
(la) brousse
 May be distinctions of “far-” vs. “near-” (Lexinote 8); may be the same as “grass(es)”.

bush (the) (2)

rural areas outside “*town”, ‘civilisation’ – this is usually in a derogatory sense, better to use “countryside”
campagne

bush-baby

small, large-eyed furry animal (a simple primate), lives in trees, has human-like hands. Strictly this is the (Senegal) galago, but the term may be extended to the similar lorises and pottos.

If several contrasting spp. check zoological ref. works.

Galago demidovii

Demidoff’s galago

?Fr.

small, forest variety

Galago senegalensis

Senegal galago

savanna

?Fr.

Perodicticus potto

Bosman’s Potto

slow, forest, short-tailed variety

potto de Bosman

potto W.Afr ‘half-a-tail’

bush-cat

big cats are usually no problem. Gh. 'tiger' (the tiger is an exclusively Asian species) may be "*leopard" or "*hyæna". The "cheetah" – *guépard* – is not in the region.
bushcat :entries following

bush-cat : "African civet"

has thick, short neck and tail
Viverra civetta

civette

"bush-cat : 2-spotted palm-civet"

Not actually a cat, but a viverrine like the "*mongoose"
"bush-cat : genet", "bush-cat : serval"; see also "bush-dogs", "squirrels"

bush-cat : "African linsang"

small forest genet, with few small spots

Poiana richardsoni

poiane

"bush-cat : genet"

bush-cat : "African Wild Cat"

savanna species

Felis sylvestris Lybica

chat sauvage d'Afrique

bush-cat : "caracal"

has pointed, tufted ears.

Felis/Lynx caracal

caracal

bush-cat : "genet"

smaller than the "*civet", more shapely and catlike

Genetta spp.

genetta

"bush-cat : African linsang"

Not actually a cat, but a viverrine like the "*mongoose"
"bush-cat : African civet", "bush-cat : serval"; see also "bush-dogs", "squirrels"

bush-cat : "golden cat"

very catty, reddish brown colouration

Felis aurata

chat d'oré

bush-cat : "serval"

very catlike.

Felis serval

serval

chat-tigre

Not actually a cat, but a viverrine like the *mongoose
"bush-cat : African civet", "bush-cat : genet"; see also "bush-dogs", "squirrels"

bush-cat : "2-spotted palm-civet"

forest dweller, with two light patches on its shoulders

Nandinia binotata

nadinie

"bush-cat : African civet"

bush-cow

"*buffalo"

bush-dogs : "fennec(-fox)"

Fennecus zerda

fennec

bush-dogs : "fox"

The only one south of the sahara is the "pale/sand fox"

Vulpes pallida

renard pâle

"bush-dogs : fennec(-fox)"

bush-dogs : "hunting dog"

is bigger, rangier, hunts in packs

Lycaon pictus

lycaon, cynhyène, loup-peint

"hyaena", "bush-cat"

bush-dogs : "jackal"

Canis aureus

chacal

"bush-dogs : side-striped jackal"

may be Gh. 'fox'

bush-dogs : "side-striped jackal"

Canis adustus

chacal à flancs rayés

bush-grapes

my name for fruit of *Lannea microcarpa* – small, grows in clusters

Lannea microcarpa

Lannea

bush-pig

"warthog"

bush-sprite

mischievous little man in the bush (red hair, feet point backwards) confuses travellers

génie (de nature/la brousse)

better than (*petit*) *diablotin* – derogatory

Gh. 'fairy' may be used in material for local use.

bush-stick

- Gh. for tree-branches cut locally for rafters, etc.

Fr. ??

business

palaver

bustard

large bird, mostly hunting on the ground

outarde

NB ≠ "*buzzard"

buzzard

1) Am. see “*vulture”;
2) Br./ornith. particular species of bird of prey
buse, busard
NB ≠ “*bustard”

caiman

“*crocodile”

calabash

This Eng. and the corresponding Fr. *calebasse* are used by ex-patriates for various woody gourds and artefacts therefrom. Local people may restrict it to the hemispherical bowl, using other terms for the seed, plant (*calebasse plante*), and vessels of other shapes *calebasse*
“calabash-(gourd-) bottle”, “calabash ladle”
calebasse cuiller
“round calabash” etc.
“gourd”
courge
may be used for edible squash/pumpkin or gourd grown for edible seeds. seed for soup see “*egusi”
There is also a tree with very similar fruits:
“Tree calabash”
Crescentia cujete
? ?Fr.

can

Am. any metal container = Br. “tin” or “tin-can” (Am. “canned food” vs. Br. “tinned food”). Fr. *boîte* is the same as “*box”. In BF *tin* is used for a large measuring-can. A large “can” or “drum” (ca. 5 gal./20 ltr.) used e.g. for carrying water is a *bidon*. A big (45 gal.) “drum” (or better “barrel” as “drum” may be musical instrument) stores or (on a vehicle) carries liquids – *tonneau*, also BF *fut*??
boîte, bidon, tonneau, (BF) tin, fut
“*box”

cane 1) (n.)

Am. for many kinds of “*stick” esp. walking stick. Br.
i) particular tpe of stick like bamboo.
ii) stick used to beat (esp) schoolchildren – Am. “paddle” (Br. for boat oar only, see “*paddle”), “switch” (Br. for connecting electricity).
iii) long stems of fruit-bushes – e.g. “raspberry canes”
canne, cravache, chicotte
“*stick”

cane 2) (v.)

Br. “to beat” (see 1.ii); Am. “paddle, switch, whip”
([whəp] ? obs. cf. Br. obs. [wɪp])
raclée
“a beating”

cane-rat

“grasscutter”

canoe

“boat”

carry

= “carry on head”
charger (strictly se charger)
carry in other ways – (specify:- “carry in hand.”, “carry on shoulder.”...)
porter
Thing carried is a “*load”, it may be cushioned with a “*head-pad”

case (1)

suitcase, hard rectangular piece of luggage
valise
“*load”
use “suitcase” for clarity

case (2)

Gh. ‘case’, a court case, litigation
“*palaver”

cashew nut

nut is at the base of the edible fruit of the cashew tree “*trees 1)”, and is poisonous until processed.
anacarde
Gh. ‘White Man’s groundnut/ackee-apple’

cassava

W. Afr./Br. (= Am. “manioc”)
Manihot utilissima
manioc

castanet

“*shaker”

cauldron

large metal cooking pot
“*pot”

chameleon

“*lizard”

charm

“*amulet”

chewing-stick

- functions as gum-cum-toothbrush
bâtonnet à dents

chicken

“*fowl”

chief

head of a village or similar unit in traditional society
chef.
Higher ruler over many chiefs can be “king”, or “Paramount chief”

roi, /??; *BF chef de canton* (? more Govt. appointment than traditional?)

chefferie f.a. is not “chief(tain)ship, chiefly power”, (which is *cheffauté*) but “palace, chief’s house”
Lesser community leaders are “elders”

ancien?

“*linguist”

‘Big man’ (Gh., vs. ‘small boy’) – important person in general

un grand/les grands; un personnalité

chimpanzee

in forest (may be erroneously used for savanna “*baboon”

Pan troglodytes

chimpanzé

chop (1)

to cut with a short, sharp motion (e.g. grass with “*cutlass”)

hâcher (*Lexinote* 9)

Beware of confusion with “*chop (2)”!

chop (2)

(Gh.) to eat. ‘chop-bar’ – restaurant, eating-place. And metaphorically esp. ‘to chop money’-”earn”, or “embezzle”; ‘cold chop’-”easy job”; ‘small chop’-”snack, tit-bits”

“*box”

‘chop-box’

“*box”

Gh.

cloth

The W.Afr. women’s – and in some areas men’s – garment of un-tailored cloth, wrapper :- ‘He is wearing cloth’. (Colonial, derogatory: “loin-cloth”)

pagne

Lengths of cloth, material, stuff, piece-goods in trade *etc.*

étouffe

pagne is also used as a measure (“This roll of cloth is two *pagnes*”) 1 *p.* = 2 yds./mtr. – Eng. equivalent measures by the ‘piece’ of 12 yds., ‘half-piece’ of 6 yds..

cloud

“*rain”

club

1) voluntary association

club

2) – stick held in the hand and designed for hitting prey in the hunt or enemy in battle.

?*massue*

cockroach

Am. “roach” (Br. “roach” is a freshwater fish!)

cafard

cock(erel)

“*fowl”

coconut

“*palm”

cocoyam

(NB not “cocoa-”) small root vegetable. Also ‘eddo(e)’, ‘curcas’, ‘dasheen’, ‘taro’ (but met. Eng. “taro” is a much bigger, Pacific island tuber.

Colocasia esculenta

both leaves and tubers eaten

Xanthosoma mafafa

also used – ‘tannia, yantia, macabo, maffa’

Fr ??

cola

1) see “*kola”; 2) fizzy drink, Gh./Br. “mineral”, Am. “soda”

coca-cola, coke

‘coloured’

also ‘fair’ : Gh. for an African of a light complexion [cf.

“*black (person)” : ‘coloured’ is Br. for non-Caucasian

(polite), S.Afr. for person of legally mixed race]

“*fair”

compound (1)

A compound “*house”, with several “*rooms” around one or more courtyards

concession, souk(h)ala also *BF* ‘*quartier*’

compound (2)

Area set aside for, e.g. missionaries, hospital or Govt.

dept. – various separate dwellings and workplaces

surrounded by a fence. Probably no local name

??*concession? terrain* (BF)

concubine

“*marriage”

cook (v.)

Distinguish modes of cooking. The general word given may be particularly “boil, stew” (cook in water)

cuire, bouiller

Cook dry on fire, “roast”

rôtir

[strictly “roast” is in an oven – *four*, also “bake” esp. if dough]

“grill” (on grid, griddle, Am. “broil”)

griller

cook in hot oil “fry”

faire sauter

f.a. *frire*, although “fried ...” can be ... *frit(e)(s)*.

utensils:- see “*pot”

[may be vocabulary for “raw/cooked”, “underdone/done, properly cooked”, “burned, overcooked”; special verbs for cooking porridge/gruel (see “*t.z.”) and/or beer (see “*pito”) – “brew” – *brasser*]

corn

Am. = Gh./Br. “maize”

maïs

Often “corn” is used in cpds. “c.-cob”, “c.-stalk” *etc.*. In Br. “corn” was originally a grain, seed (as in “peppercorn”) and later cereal crops in general. Some W.Afr. may use “corn” for maize; if the local Eng. uses “maize” use this, but enter “corn” with X-ref. “corn-crib” see “granary” to “shell”, “shuck” corn *égrener*

cosmetics

see “make-up”

country

do not use without qualification – multiple ambiguities “countryside”, “earth”, “land”, “town”

countryside

1) vs. “town”

campagne

see “the bush (2)”

2) as “landscape”, “scenery”

paysage

couscous

A North Afr. processed granulated cereal food (similar to semolina)

couscous

Fr. in savanna area use this, but in the forest area this may also be a f.a. for “fufu”

cousin

“kindred, kin”

cow

bovine, (adult), female bovine.

hump-backed type

zebu

??Fr. *vache*: “hump” is *bosse*

crocodile

The Afr. spp. of crocodylians are all “crocodiles”

Crocodylus spp.

crocodile

Common in W.Afr. “African dwarf crocodile”

Osteotetraspis

‘caiman’ – *caiman* (used by BF for crocodile) and “alligator” (used by Am. for crocodile) are only found in the Americas.

cultivate

see “hoe”

cusimanse

see “mongoose”

cutlass

W.Afr./Br. (Am. machete pronounced muh-CHE-ty or muh-SHE-ty) – large general-purpose bush-knife *machète, machette, coupe-coupe* see also “knife”

cutting-grass

see “grasscutter”

‘dash’

W.Afr. : a small gift or payment: may be :-

i) “alms” to a beggar;

ii) “tip” for services rendered;

iii) “bribe” or

iv) “discount or commission” for buying in quantity.

Fr?? in Burkina Faso, i)/ii)/iii) – cadeau

dasheen

see “cocoyam”

dassie or hyrax

a small, furry, rabbitlike animal

daman

“rock hyrax/dassie”, on savanna

Procavia capensis

daman de rocher

“tree hyrax/dassie”

Dendrohyrax arboreus

daman d’arbre

date (1)

fruit of date-palm

datte

date (2)

an “appointment”, engagement

rendez-vous

date (3)

a particular “day” of calendar

date

date (4)

Am. ‘date’, a “boy/girlfriend”

see “marriage : (preparation for) 3)”

date-palm

see “palm”

dawadawa

Sp. tree which produces flowers (red pompoms on long stalks) which children eat. After the flowers, long pods are formed which turn dark red when ripe and contain a sweet yellow powder (name is often used for “yellow”), and black seeds which are made into a fermented seasoning for soup (black, waxy balls). Empty pods are boiled to yield a red dye.

Parkia (biglobosa in W., clappertonia in E.)

nééré

“dawadawa pods”

gousse de néré
“dawadawa flour”
farine de néré
“dawadawa seeds”

graines de néré
“dawadawa balls/seasoning”
soumbala/condiment (de néré)

Some writers use “locust tree”, “locust bean”, but this is not the carob (flat, sweet, chewy black pods) I have seen imported in UK as “locust beans” (and that some suggest John the Baptist ate – Matt. 3,4). Irvine gives “West African locust bean” – *P. oliveri*

day

period of 24 hours, as in “he was there 3 days”

jour(née)
daytime (vs. night)
?jour (non nuit)?/(pas nuit)?

specific day, “date” of the calendar, or “day of ...”, as in “the day of the funeral”

jour de ...

defecate

see “*fæces”

dibble (n.)

also “dibber, dibbing-stick”: stick used to make holes for planting seeds

plantoir

Diospyros

tree bearing small fruits as a snack (‘monkey-guavas’)

Diospyros mespiliformis

Diospyros, néflier (Prost) ébénier (Nicole)

other Eng. names for Diospyros: Gledhill calls this “*ebony”; also known as “West Afr./swamp ebony”, “date-plum”, Fr. *jijib*

dirt

Impurity, usually surface, related to adj. “dirty”

saleté, adj. sale

Am. for “*earth”, soil

dish

“*pot”

diviner

see “*soothsayer”

dog

(male) dog

chien

female = “*bitch”

chienn

[“bitch” is impolite in Br. and worse in Am. but OK for female dog in dictionary: enter under “dog” with Xref.

“bitch” see “dog”]

young is “puppy”

chiot see also “bush-dogs”

donkey

“male donkey”

âne

“ass” is obs. in Br. and obscene in Am..

“female donkey”

ânesse

“jack(ass)/jenny” obs.

“donkey foal”

Fr. ??

“asinine” is obs. as ‘donkey-kind’ – now only “idiotic”

doughnut

bread dough, deep-fried, Gh. ‘bufrut’.

Fr. ?? ‘bofrut’ (BF)

doughnut-(ring) shaped ring of grass or cloth to cushion headloads, see “*head-pad”

dove

see “*pigeon”

drum (1)

musical instrument

tambour

small drum, Eng. “tomtom” obs. exc. perh. for N.Am. indian instrument

tamtam

hour-glass shape (head at each end linked by strings, tension adjusted by squeezing under the arm)

tambour sablier

“cylinder drum” with wooden or metal (Fr. ??) body

tambour en gros bois

“talking drum”

tambour parlant

“calabash drum” (large round calabash with about 1/3 of the top removed and covered with skin).

tambour calabasse

drum (2)

see “*can”

dugout

see “&*boat”

duiker

see “*antelope”

earth

ambiguous (triguoous!) in English between i) the planet Earth; ii) “the world”; and iii) the substance in which one plants seeds.

i) la Terre; ii) le Monde; iii) terre.

also “soil”, and (Am.) “*dirt”, although this is also ambiguous.

le sol

“soil” as a verb means “make dirty” but the word “soil” alone would not usually be interpreted in this way. (“night-soil” euphem. for “*fæces”)

“ground” is i) a location “fell to the ground”; ii) an area, “a plot of ground”

i) (à) terre; ii) terrain

see also “*bush (the) (2)”; “*farm”; “*land”; “*town”
May need multi-word glosses “earth, soil” etc. – Lex. 7

earthpriest

see “*soothsayer”

ebony

Gh. uses this for a tree bearing small black fruits (Gh. ‘blackberries’)

Vitex cienkowskii

vitex

see also “*Diospyros”; “bauhinia”

eddo

see “*cocoyam”

eggplant

see “*garden-egg”

egusi

a gourd whose seeds are ground up as a “*soup”
ingredient, esp. seeds of:

Cucumeropsis edulis; C. manii

Fr.?? graines de courge

also “red egusi, neri” – seeds of:

Colocynthis citrullus

sp. also “agusi”

elephantiasis

see “*hernia”

engage

1) to take somebody into employment.

engager (?)

better to use “employ” (or “hire” Am.)

2) to mechanically fit together, as with gears “to engage
gears”

engager

3) “be engaged” be busy (telephone Br. “number is
engaged” = Am. “busy line”); not free or available
(businessman, or toilet)

occupé

4) “be/get engaged”, betrothed see “*marriage”

5) “*engagement”, “*appointment”

rendez-vous

engagement

“*engage (5)”; “*appointment”

entrails

*belly

fæces

European reticence over natural functions makes this
vocab. difficult.

1) straightforward “shit” is usually considered
unprintable.

merde

by strict lexicographic principles, these terms should be
used if the local lg. is similarly taboo.

2) Lists usually use scientific “fæces”, Am.sp. “feces”
excrément(s)

all Eng. terms are mass nouns: completely stymied if
need to refer to a single “turd” (taboo) – ?faex?!?)

3) “Dung” usually only of animals

crotte, crottin

“dung” referred to as “manure” when used as a fertiliser
(Eng. “night-soil” = human excrement used for this
purpose).

fumier

“stool” popular med. but ambiguous, “excrement” obs.,
“excreta” (?sg. “excretum”) covers other body -products
For verb “defecate” (“excrete” is too general); “Bowel
movement”, “to dirty” and various baby-talk terms
mainly used en famille.

déféquer

Local Eng. may use some school term for the place to
refer to excretion – “(go to) latrine” (“toilet/
lavatory/WC”) – even for the substance.

fair

1) in metropolitan Eng., usually of hair

blond(e)

obs. “market”

foire, fête

“funfair”, amusement park

fête foraine

just, equitable

juste, équitable

see also “*coloured”

fairy

Gh. “*bush-sprite”

false kapok (tree)

“*kapok”

farm

1) (n.) In Europe the agricultural holding of one farmer,
ferme

subdivided into “fields”

champs

In Afr. one man may speak of his several ‘farms’. Lists in
Eng. usually use this local sense of ‘farm’, while Fr. uses
champs

Local lg. may use a special term for a “plot” devoted to a
certain crop, such as “maize-plot” (or “-farm”)

terrain

(v.) see “*hoe”²

feather

“*hair”

feces

Am. sp. “*fæces”

fetish

derogatory term for places and objects of traditional worship (may also be used by bilingual évolués – also “juju”)

fétiche may be a “*shrine*” (or *grave-site*), can we use *châsse*??

a protective or offensive ‘medicine’ (Gh.), or an object of worship, “fetish” proper? Sacred rocks, springs or trees may be so called – last is a “fetish grove”
“*medicine”; “*ordeal”; “*witch”; “*soothsayer”

fiancé(e)

“*marriage”

Ficus (sp.)

“*fig tree”

fiddle

1) stringed musical instrument with a sound-box and neck, bowed. Most common is the one-stringed fiddle of calabash covered with snake or lizard skin, with a horsehair string on curved stick neck.

Ha. *goge* – Fr may say *guitare*. (musicologically *violon monochorde*)

Used by “*praise-singer”

If Gh. uses ‘guitar’ it is for the “sansa” (“Kaffir piano”) – instrument with longish, springy tongues fixed at one end to a sound box

BF guitare

but how can one contrast this with “fiddle” and with “*zither”? see “*kalabule”

field

see “*farm” 1

fig tree

Ficus spp.

ficus

not the same as the Mediterranean fig.

firewood

bois de feu

flail

flexible or two-part, hinged stick for threshing grain

fléau

floor

“*mortar”

flour-ball

millet flour with seasonings, dampened and rolled into balls. Eaten by mashing (see “*smash”) with milk and, in more spacious times, sugar.

Gh. ‘fura’ (= Ha.)

Fr.??

flying-fox

bat, fruit~

fonio

“*millet”

foreigner

“*stranger”

forked stick

bois fourchu

fowl

In Br., gallinaceans in general are “chickens”, the young are “chicks”, and if necessary to specify, adult male/female are “cock(ere)l/hen” (castrated male, “capon” – *chapon* – and young female, “pullet” – *poulette* – are technical terms of the trade). In Am. “chicken” is also the term for the young (although “chick” is also used), and the male is “rooster”. In W.Afr. the only term is “fowl”, and it is safer unless with a very well-educated bilingual to use “young-/female-/male-fowl” rather than “chick(en)” (confusion of species/young), “rooster” (not known), and “hen” (which may be heard as “hand”).

poule (sp./female), *poussin* (young; not, f.a. “*pussy*”!), *coq* (male)

“poultry” covers all domestic birds (fowls, guinea-fowl, ducks, pigeons)

volaille

I have seen the latter Fr. used for “fowl”

fox

“*bush-dog”

Frafra potato

Gh. for a sp. of small, potato-like tuber.

Coleus dysentericus, *C. rotundifolius*, *C. dazo*

also “coleus potato”, “Hausa potato”, ‘rizga’, ‘tumuku’
patate indigène?

pomme de terre africaine.

“*cassava”; “*cocoyam”; “*yam”

frame

“*woodwork”

fried-cakes

fermented batter, often maize, deep-fried in ca. 1/3 cupfuls: Gh. ‘maasa’, (Ha.)

galette de maïs

There may be a special “maasa-tray” to cook them – many separate little cups on the upper surface to cook one cake each.

Other snacks, see “*beancake”; “*doughnut”; “*flour-ball”; “*kuli-kuli”

friend

ami(e)

May be a more formalized relationship – “girl-/boy-friend”

ami(e)

(?How distinguish the two senses?)

fry
“*cook”

fufu
staple of pounded root (yam, cassava ...) or plantain.
boule (Cd, Cm, BF); *foutou* (BF, CI); *foufou* (TG.)
also ‘**couscous*’

fur
“*hair”

fura
“*flour-ball”

galago
“*bush-baby”

garbage
“*rubbish”

‘**garden-egg**’
(Gh.) – the “aubergine”, especially local varieties with small, whitish or yellowish fruits. Also, esp. Am., “egg-plant”
Solanum melongena esculenta
aubergine (indigène)
“*bitter-tomato’

gari
processed, grated “*cassava” granules; easily-stored, comparatively instant staple.
Fr ??

gecko
“*lizard”

gin
“*pito”

glass
1) vitreous, usually transparent substance used for windows, “*bottles” &c. :
2) drinking-vessel usually made of 1)
verre = 1) and 2) “*bottle”

goat
chèvre
male, “*billy-”; female, “*nanny-”; young, “*kid”

gorilla
Gorilla gorilla
gorille
only in remote forests in Cm. May be used by local Eng./Fr. for “*baboon”, “*chimpanzee” or large “*monkey”

gourd
“*calabash”

grain food
“*t.z.”

granary
storage place for cereal-crop produce
grenier
May be vernacular distinctions according to structure – clay/brick/cement vs. matting, vs. very large pot or basket (specify). Am. ‘corn-crib’ would be very suitable, but it is unknown to W.Afr. and Br. (see “*corn”)
Other produce?
“-store” e.g. “yam-store”
?? *dépôt de ...*

grasscutter
(Gh.) a rodent related to the porcupine, a much-favoured game animal for meat.
Thryonomys swinderianus
also ‘cutting-grass’, ‘palm-/cane-rat’
rat palmiste
N.B. not a lawn-mower – *tondeuse de gazon!*:
Eng. “palmist” is a fortune-teller, see “*soothsayer”!
aulacode
‘agouti’ – *agouti* is erroneous – agouti is an American species
Lexinote 15 (forthc.)

gravel
“*mortar”

grindstone
The local hand-grinding equipment is usually a large i) “lower-grindstone”, possibly fixed in place (“grinding table”) with a smaller ii) “upper-grindstone” moved by hand to crush/grind the grain *etc.* onto the lower.
i) meule; ii) molette
The whole mill may be called by the name of the lower stone. “Quern” is better kept for a rotary system, and “mill” for powered gear.

griot
“*praise-singer”

groom
“*marriage”

ground
“*earth”

groundnut
The W.Afr. name for the underground-fruited legume *Arachis hypogaea*
Br. tends to use i) “groundnut” for growing, exporting, etc. , and ii) “peanut” at the consumers’ end (“peanut butter” etc.). Am. uses “peanut” throughout (“The people here farm corn and peanuts.”)
i) arachide; ii) cacahouète
“*Bambarra bean”
[Am. ‘goober (pea)’ is regional, ethnic]

grove
“*fetish”

gruel
“&*t.z.”

guest
“*stranger”

guineacorn
cereal used especially as malt for brewing (see “*pito”).
May be Eng. “sorghum”, or sometimes specifically types of sorghum with red grains, the white being included under millet (or millets and sorghums grouped together and named according to colour, size or time of planting – e.g. “red/big/late-millet-or-sorghum.”)
sorgho, gros mil, mil rouge

guineafowl
pintade
(Port. *pintada* – “painted” – referring to the coloured head of the adult).

guinea-grains
a type of black pepper – small black seeds in dark brown pod (2cm)
Fr??

guineaworm
the eggs of the worm enter the body in a tiny water-snail (can be removed by straining through cloth) and develop in the tissues into worms up to ca. 1 metre long, resembling cooked spaghetti.
Dracunculus medinensis
ver de Guinée, filaire
Vernacular lg. may have a lexeme for the swelling (and gloss this as ‘guineaworm’/’*filaire*’), the worm itself being the ‘child’ or ‘seed’ of it.

guitar
“*fiddle”

guts
“*belly”

hair
“hair (of the head)”
cheveu(x)
“hair (of the body), animal hair”
poil(s)
This distinction in Fr. corresponds to that in many W.Afr. lgs (others may make no such contrast). The latter term may also cover “fur” – *fourrure*, and “feather” may be the same word (Swadesh list nos. 37, 131, 36). The Eng. distinction between animal “hair” (stiff) and “fur” (strokable) is not found in many lgs. In leather trade “pelt” – skin with fur/hair still on – may contrast with (shaved) “skin”.

half-a-tail
“*bush-baby”

hamlet
“*town”

hammerheaded bat
bat, fruit-~

handbag
“*sack”

handle
wooden handle of, e.g. hoe, may be “hoe-stick”
manche

hare
“*rabbit”

hat
there may be a general word for headgear, perhaps literally ‘head-cover’, for which I have seen:
bonnet, chapeau
Various types – be as specific as possible:
“turban” – length of cloth wound round head
turban
“straw hat”
chapeau en paille
‘bag-hat’ (T.N.) – longish cylinder, floppy
Fr. ??
“skull-cap” – Muslim style
?? calotte
“fez” – conical, red felt
fez
“diadem”(?) – round temples, but crown bare
diadème
This last term implies that it is a badge of high office (cf “crown” – *couronne*): ?? term if it is ordinary headwear?
“*head-tie”
[Qualify “large hat”, “small hat”, “conical hat”, “wide-brimmed” etc.]

hatchet
“*axe”

head-tie
Gh., woman’s headscarf or kerchief
foulard couvrechef
a “veil” of fancy net may be worn over the normal headgear
? voile
in some areas men may wear a “turban”
turban
“*hat”

head-pad
ring-doughnut-shaped pad used between head and hard-/flat-bottomed headloads
porte-charge “*carry”

heifer

génisse

hemp

1) see “*rope-plant”; 2) may be known and have local Fr./Eng. name (Gh. ‘wee’) as the drug ‘pot’ etc.

hen

“*fowl”

henna

“*make-up”

herbalist

(Gh.)

“*medicine”

‘hernia’

Gh. elephantiasis (of scrotum)

éléphantiasis

hibiscus

1) decorative flowering shrub, colonial import, probably no local name;

2) see “*okra”;

3) see “*rope-plant”;

4) see “*rosella”

hippopotamus

found in savanna waters

Hippopotamus amphibius

hippopotame

“pigmy hippopotamus” – forest Lb, SL

Choeropsis liberiensis

hippopotame pygmée

hoe

1) (n.) The main local cultivating tool, usually a short wooden handle with an iron blade at right angles, pulls earth towards the user.

houe, daba (BF).

May be different names for big “trenching/furrowing hoe” – *pioche* (“mattock”, but this strictly has a pick-blade opposite the digging blade: in Europe this work is usually done with a “spade, shovel” – pushed away from the user, not pulled) and other specific types – describe or illustrate [Lexinote 13 (forthc.)].

2) (v.) To use a hoe

cultiver

Eng. “to cultivate” is a partial f.a. for this, being used in this sense in technical parlance, but normally being a more general term for producing farm crops. “To hoe” may be used generally for “to farm”

May need to distinguish hoeing to clear growth around crops – “to weed” – *sarcler*

hog

(esp. Am.) = “pig”

“*warthog”

honey-badger

“*ratel”

hornbill

(bird) various types

Tockus spp.

calao

host

“*stranger”

house

A dwelling-unit

Might as well use the ordinary Eng. word, although to show a particular type, “*compound” can be used.

French does not, as far as I know, use *maison* for an African house

The head of the compound is ‘house-owner’,

‘householder’ or (Gh.) ‘landlord’

? *patron*

Whole group are ‘house-people’

Fr.??

hurdle

portable fence-panel of woven sticks

claié?

husband

“*marriage”

hut

a derogatory term for a “*room” – “the natives live in mud huts”. Better reserved for a non-residential shed such as a ‘booth’ on a farm, “farm hut”

hutte

hyaena

may be either 1) “striped hyaena”

Hyaena hyaena

hyène striée

or 2) “spotted hyaena”

Crocuta crocuta

hyène tachetée

May be Gh. ‘wolf’ or ‘tiger’ (there are no wolves or tigers in Afr.)

hyrax

see “*dassie or hyrax”

iguana

“*monitor”

insect

“*bug”

insult

(n., v.) Afr.Eng. ‘abuse’ (esp. v.): Am./Br. more normally “insult”; (‘abuse’ has modern uses for physical/sexual

mistreatment or addiction – ‘substance abuse’
insulter, insulte
 (abuser is a f.a. – “deceive, mislead”)

intestines
 “*belly”

jar
 Usually a wide-mouthed glass container in Br. and maybe C.E.; also “water-jar” for a kind of “*pot”
 “*pot”

jug
 In Br.Eng. a wide-mouthed container for liquids with a lip for pouring: Am. “pitcher”. In Am.Eng. any container for liquids, often with a narrow neck (Br. “bottle”)
cruche
 “*pot”

juju
 “*fetish”; “*medicine”

kalabule
 Ghana: corruption, bribery, ‘wheeling and dealing’ (Am.), ‘fiddle’ (Br.)
 ‘matabiche’ (Zaire), ‘biche’ (? = Fr.)
 ?? Fr. and other?

kapok tree
 The kapok tree is tall with straight branches, smooth grey bark, and prominent buttress roots (the underground roots are shallow, trees often fall over in gales). Greenish-white flowers produce cigar-shaped pods which fall when ripe and are collected for the kapok (-cotton) inside.

Ceiba pentandra
fromager
 for some reason the French call this a ‘cheese-tree’
 What I call the ‘false kapok’ has brightly-coloured (pink, red, orange) flowers on leafless boughs (the dried calices are used for a soup seasoning), then produces roundish pods which open on the tree and scatter cotton to the wind.

Bombax buonopozense
kapokier
 the ‘false kapok’ is the one of these two called a ‘kapok’ in Fr.
 Some English speakers use “silk cotton” for both. Some sub-varieties of each species have large thorns (broad-based like rose thorns) on trunk and/or branches.

keep
 (Gh.) may be “store, put away”

keep long
 (Gh.) “(be) a long time (in doing sth.)”, “be late” (local v. = Eng. adv.)

kenaf
 “*rope-plant”

kenkey
 (Gh.) fermented “*corn”-dough:- 1) steamed in leaves as a snack ‘stodge’ food; 2) mashed (see “*smash”) with water and flavourings as a drink
Fr ??

kettle
 In Br., only a metal “*pot” with a small top opening and a tubular spout for pouring. In Am. this is a ‘tea-kettle’, and kettle by itself is used for various open mouthed metal “*pot”s with no handle or a top handle like a bucket. Better to avoid the term: the local vessel which resembles the tea-kettle, but may be plastic (blue and white!) is used by Muslims to carry and pour water for ritual ablutions (does not spill or evaporate easily, spout allows quantity and aim of pour-out to be controlled): – any local Eng./Fr. for this?
 “*pot”

kid
 1) young goat
cabri
 2) human child, esp. informal, may be derog.
gosse
 only use 2) if the Afr. word has these connotations

kindling
 small twigs *etc.* used to start fire
brindille

kindred, kin
 people who are genealogically related: “kin” is used in Am., both are obs. in Br. “kindred”, “kinship” used in anthropology.
parents, (liens de) parenté
 Normal Br. is “*relation” or “*relative” (both, unfortunately, are multiply ambiguous: ? use “relative, kin” or some such?)
 “*parent”, “*sibling”, “*uncle”, “*uterine”
 As kinship systems differ, look out and account for all relevant distinctions in the local system (Naden, 1976, App.A.). In a wordlist it is better not to use terms like “uncle”, “aunt”, “cousin”, or only with x-ref to “mother’s brother” *etc.*. Be prepared for odd local applications of such Eng. (Fr.) terms – ‘aunt’ for MoBro, or ‘to uncle’ for ‘play the part of a MoBro’

kite
 bird of prey, the “black kite” – dark brown, forked tail
Milvus nigrans
milan

knife
 for ordinary, small hand-knife, no problem in using “knife”
couteau
 Big grass/wood-cutting straight knife see “*cutlass” (local lg. may just be “(big)knife”. ‘panga’ is E. African)
 In war, see “*sword”
 Curved, for grass, see “*sickle”

kohl

“*make-up”

koko

(Hausa = “gruel”)
“*t.z.”

kola

nut chewed for mildly stimulant properties and used in ritual exchanges; also “cola”

kola, cola

tree

Sterculia acuminata

kolatier

kuli-kuli

(Gh. from Hausa) – leftover pulp of “*groundnuts” after oil extraction, rolled into pellets or looped ropes and fried till hard.

Fr ??

kusimanse

“*mongoose”

land

1) dry land, not sea

terre ferme

2) see “*earth”

landlord

“*house”

laterite

“*mortar 2)”

latrine

“*fæces”

left small

Gh. “soon”

leopard

Felis pardus

léopard, panthère

“*bush-cats”, “*lion”

- may be ‘tiger’ in Gh.

lightning

“*rain”

linguist

Gh. : an elder who acts as an intermediary between “*chief” and people.

Fr ??

linsang

“*bush-cats”

lizard

lézard

“* agama”: ...entries following; “*monitor”

Probably distinguish various species: be as specific as possible:- see further entries.

(What lizard does BF call *salamandre*? – no “salamander” spp. in Afr.)

lizard : agama

large, rough, male with red head may be given a separate name.

Agama sp.

lézard-/margouillat-agame

lizard : chameleon

changes colour

Chamaeleo chamaeleon

caméléon

(older Br. spelling “chamaeleon”)

lizard : gecko

knobbly, soft, hunts at night, sticky, suckered feet (runs up walls and over ceilings)

fam. gekkonidae

gecko

lizard : skink

smooth, snaky, may be brightly coloured

Mabuya spp.

Fr ??

load

(count n. in Gh. – ‘load/loads’ usually mass in Br./Am.) is Gh. for “luggage”, Am. “bags, baggage”.

bagages

also “head-load/s”

- *charge/s*

“*sack”, “*carry”

Lexinote 17 (forthc.)

locust (-tree, -bean)

“*dawadawa”

log

thick section of tree trunk, large branch

bûche

loin-cloth

“*cloth 1)”, “*pants 1)”

loris

“*bush-baby”

lorry

Gh. “motor vehicle”

voiture

Gh. also baby’s “pram” (Br., = Am. ‘buggy’)

voiture d’enfant

Br. large commercial vehicle, = Am. "truck"
camion
 Small private passenger vehicle may be W.Afr./Br.
 "(motor)car"
voiture, auto
 plying for hire Br. "taxi", Gh. "service", Am. "cab"
taxi
 Enclosed type Br. "saloon", Am. "sedan" (large,
 expensive "limousine"), Afr. ??
Fr.??
 Small commercial, closed back "van"
camionette
 open back "pick-up"
Fr.??
 "cart" (Am. also "waggon") is pulled by an animal
charrette
 Br. "(hand-)truck", pushed by boys, = Am. "trolley"
charrette à bras
 W.Afr. passenger lorry/truck 'tro-tro' or 'mammy-
 wagon'
Fr.??
 Custom-made passenger vehicle "bus". (one type Gh.
 'soccer' – the motto of the first of the type on the road.)
autobus, (auto)car

lover
 "**marriage"

luggage
 "**load"

lumber
 Am. = "**timber"

lye
 (Am. = "alkali" Br.
 "**spice-water"

macabo
 "**cocoyam"

machete
 "**cutlass"

maffa
 "**cocoyam"

mahogany
 tree with hard, dark red wood useful for making e.g. a
 "**mortar 1)"
Khaya senegalensis
caïlcédrat

maize
 (= Am. "**corn")
maïs

make-up
maquillage
 Traditional cosmetics may include "henna", red dye used

e.g. to stain palms or soles. (Local Fr./Eng. ??)
Fr.??
 "kohl" or "antimony", black make-up (?mascara?). (Local
 Fr./Eng. ??)
Fr.??
 ? "skin-oil", perfumed oil for skin, Gh. 'pomade'.
 ? *pommade ??*
 "lipstick", red, greasy cosmetic used to make various
 beauty-marks. (Local Fr./Eng.??)
 ? *bâton de rouge*
 "talcum powder", Gh. 'powder' (pɔdda)
talc

mallet
 large wooden club for driving pegs, smashing old walls or
 lumps of earth etc.
maillet
there may also be a smaller "hammer"
marteau
 Lexinote 13 (forthc.)

malt
 germinated grain for making beer
mil germé (pour le dolo)
 "**pito"

man
homme
 N.B. – ambiguous between "male" and "human" which
 may well be different in local language. In Eng. use
 "man(male)", and "person" ("human being") may be
 different again, but Fr. *personne* also means "nobody".
 Some writers use "*homme (vir)*", "*homme (homo)*"

manatee
 water-cow, living in rivers and lakes
Trichechus senegalensis
lamantin

manioc
 "**cassava"

marriage : (official/recognised liaison)
 There are different sex and marriage customs in different
 cultures, and the choosing of appropriate simple glosses
 is difficult. "Marriage" is a recognised, long-lasting,
 publicly-recognised union.
mariage
 Partners are 1) "husband" (man)
époux
 and 2) "wife"
femme, épouse
 [some lgs. may distinguish "wife" and "woman" as in
 Eng., enter "wife"....[see also "woman"] ' and vice
 versa; some may not – "woman, wife"....]"wife [see
 "woman"] " – as in French:- better therefore to use Fr.
 alternative *épouse*]

In polygyny, husband's other wife is her "co-wife", Gh. 'rival'

co-épouse

"concubine" is a legal sex-partner of lesser status than wife (often a slave)

Ceremony initiating or formalising marriage is "wedding"

noces

The rôles in a wedding are 1) "bride"

nouvelle mariée

and 2) "bridegroom" (also 'groom' is possible, but this can also be 'horse-attendant' - *valet d'écurie*)

nouveau marié

"*marriage :" entries following; "*birth, to give ~"; "*friend"; "*kin"

"to marry" may be a different verb if "___(man subject)" from "___(woman subject)". Bridal attendants – 'bridesmaids', 'best man' will be culturally-specific.

marriage : (preparation for)

Recognised stages on the way to marriage may be relation with "fiancé(e)" in both Fr. and Eng.

fiancé(e)

modern Eng. v. is "get/be engaged; engagement", but obs. "betroth(ed)" may be useful to suggest a different custom and avoid ambiguity.

se fiancer/ être fiancé (e)(s); fiançailles

"girl-/boy-friend" for relationship which may not necessarily lead to marriage or involve intercourse. [Am. '*date' (n,v.) but this is multiply ambiguous]

ami(e)

this Fr. may be a friend of the same sex also.

marriage : (unofficial/extra-marital liaison)

"lover, mistress" implies an extra-marital liaison disapproved (or at least ambiguously regarded) by society.

? *amant(e)*

does this have the same connotations??

How to express the accepted non-physical-sex "friend" relationship of a married person with a person of the opposite sex? (May be Gh. 'lover').

mash

"*smash"

mattock

"*hoe"

mean

Am. = rough, fierce, cruel, bad tempered; Br. = miserly, stingy, tight: disambiguate with "cruel, violent" vs. "miserly"

medicine

There may be a general term for all of the below, or different lexical items.

remède (gen. term)

Western style "medicament, medication"

médicament

(as prescribed by) a "doctor"

docteur, médecin

Traditional cures ingested by the patient or applied to the site of the complaint – "(traditional/herbal) medicine" prescribed by a "medicine-man, herbalist"

guérisseur

(*féticheur* ambiguous – see "*fetish")

Magical procedures/materials/objects designed to cure, afflict, kill *etc.* at a distance by resemblance to the desired result (sympathetic magic) *etc.* "(magic) medicine, juju"

gri(s)-gri(s)

"*witch"; "*amulet"

millet

Traditional cereal crop, especially for making "*t.z."

mil

"Bulrush-millet" has long head covered with seeds.

Fr ??

Wild millet ("fonio" sometimes in Eng., also "aca")

digitaria exilis

fonio

"early/late" may be distinguished. Some "*sorghum" may be included.

mill(stone)

"*grindstone"

mongoose

various types. Larger than "*squirrels" and mice, fierce predator, short, thick neck and tail.

Mungos spp., Herpestes spp.

mangouste

"banded mongoose"

Mungos mungo

mongue rayée

"Cusimanse (Kusimanse)", "Dark mongoose" – short, stout (others long and thin) forest sp.

Crossarchus obscurus

crossarche, mangouste brune

monitor lizard

Iguana-type lizard (Am. may say (Sp.) "iguana" – *iguane*) – stays near water, can grow to 2m long

varan

"Nile monitor"

varan du Nil

in dry areas, "desert monitor"

varan des sables

monkeys

singes

monkeys : ...entries following; "*baboon", "*chimpanzee", "gorilla" (apes)

monkeys : baboon

"*baboon"

monkeys : Colobus

“black Colobus” (with prominent white plumes)

Colobus polykomos

colobe blanc et noir

“red colobus” – stocky, with fuzzy face

Colobus varus

colobe (de van Beneden), colobe bai

“olive colobus” – stocky, with fuzzy face

colobus badris

monkeys : diana

pointed white beard

carcopithecus diana

carcopithèque diane

monkeys : green

common savannah sp.

Carcopithecus aethiops

vervet, grinet

monkeys : mona

forest sp.

Carcopithecus mona

mone

monkeys : red patas

tall, slim, red

Erythrocebus patas, patas patas

patas, singe rouge

monkeys : white-collared mangabey

coastal, top of head red-brown

Cercocebus torquatus

cercocèbe à collier blanc

monkeys : white-nosed, Greater-

coast, not Gh., Tg.: dark grey-black

Cercopithecus nictitans

hocheur

monkeys : white-nosed, Lesser-

reddish, coastal sp. Togo and West

Cercopithecus petaurista

pétauriste

monkey-bread

“baobab fruit”

mortar

mortier

Both Eng. and Fr. are ambiguous between 1) “pounding pot”

mortier à piler

used with “pestle, pounding pole”

pilon

and 2) mixture for fixing stones/bricks together in building : “(building) mortar” *’adobe’

mortier pour bâtir, banco

may also include clay for building the whole wall – W.Afr. ‘swish’, “sand”; Sp./Am. “adobe”, Br. (derog.) “mud” (see “*room”)

banco, pisé, torchis

Sun-dried clay bricks and walls need smooth waterproof outer skin; verb “plaster (with)”

crépir

substance “plaster”

crépie

Finish coat may be “limewash/whitewash”

chaux

“to whitewash”

blanchir à la chaux

Floors may be made of beaten or pounded clay or laterite “gravel”

latérite

“to pound, tamp”

damer

There may be a special tool “floor-pounder” (or use a “*mallet”)

Fr.??

mule

cross between (male) horse and (female) “*donkey”

nanny-goat

female “*goat”

chèvre (-femelle)

neri

“*egusi”

nut

Most used in the area are not true nuts.

for “coconut” see “*palm”; for “peanut” see “*groundnut”;

for “sheanut” see “*shea”; “*cashew nut”; “tiger nut”

oar

“*paddle”

oil

“*palm”; “*groundnut”; “*shea”

okra = “okro”

Hibiscus esculentus

gombo

ordeal

Method of determining whether somebody is lying, is guilty, is a witch *etc.* by making them take something from boiling oil/water, drink poison or other magic medicine *etc.*

?*épreuve?*

“*medicine”; “*sasswood”; “*witch”

oribi

antelope : oribi

otter

furry animal living in/near water

loutre

“cape clawless otter” – large, grey chest

Aonyx capensis

loutre à joues blanches

“spotted-necked otter”

Lutra maculicollis

loutre à cou tacheté

paddle

1) a) stick used in the hands to drive a “*boat” through the water. (“oar” pivots on the boat either through holes or rowlocks).

pagaie

b) (v.) to use the above.

pagayer

2) Am. = “*cane 1)” to beat a child.

“*boat”

palaver

classical pigin : word so translated may group the senses of “word”, “matter”, “business”, “concern”, “concerning, relevant to”, “trouble”, “quarrel”, “court case” :- in which case, ‘palaver’ is the best entry-word

?*palabre*

A very common word in the vernacular rarely found in vocabularies, perhaps because of the lack of a convenient gloss and an unwillingness to use ‘palaver’/*palabre*? : some use “word, business, ‘case’”/*mot, parole*

palm

English uses “palm tree” for many different species, with qualifiers: – be as specific as possible.

palmier

Some areas make extensive use of “palm oil”

huile de palme

obtained from “palm-fruits”

noix de palme

made of separate “palmnuts”

noyau, amande de palmiste

A “stalk” or “bunch” of bananas, plantains/”cluster” of palmnuts

régime de bananes/palmiste

palm :entries following

palm : banana

“banana palm”

B. aethiopium

bananier

A single group of bananas is a “hand” (informal “bunch”)

palm : borassus

“borassus/fan palm” – large shiny orange fruits

Borassus aethiopum

rônier

palm : coconut

“coconut palm”

Cocos nucifera

coco, (noix de coco)

palm : date

“date (palm)”

Phoenix dactylifera

dattier, (datte)

palm : dum

“dum palm” – (forks and branches)

Hyphaene thebaica

palmier-doum

palm : oil

“oil palm”

Elais guineensis

palmier (à l’huile)

palm : plantain

“plantain palm”

bananier

palm : raphia

“raphia” (also “bamboo palm”, “wine palm”)

(“raffia” is different)

Raphia vinifera, Raphia hookeri

raphia

The raphia trunk is tapped for alcoholic “palm wine”

vin de palme

“*pito”; “*palm : oil”

palm : royal

“royal palm” – tall smooth stem, decorative

Fr.??

pan

1) Gh. Corrugated iron roof sheet (also “zinc”)

tôle ondulée

2) “*pot”

pangolin

scaly anteater

“Giant pangolin” may be confused with “*aardvark”

Manis gigantea

pangolin géant

“tree pangolin”

Manis tricuspis

pangolin (à écailles tricuspides)

*aardvark

likely candidate for local Eng./Fr. names – any offers?

pants

1) Br./W.Afr. underpants

slip

I suggest “T-string” for traditional men’s ‘underpants’, consisting of a strip of cloth around the waist and another between the legs, sewn to the waistband at the front.

Women traditionally wear “leaves” but may have cloth “G-string” – both in Fr. *cache-sexe*

2) Am. = 1) or = “trousers”

pantalon

Traditional baggy trousers (?? Eng. term – “pantaloons”!?)

Fr??

papaya

“*pawpaw”

parent

father and/or mother.

You may have to use this conjoined phrase in French and other languages.

parent is f.a. “*relation, *kin”

pass

often used in comparison in W.Afr.Eng., representing local construction with verb best glossed “pass, surpass (in comp.)”:

e.g. ‘A pass B’ = “A is better than B”;

‘A tall/height pass B’ = “A is taller than B”

pawpaw

W.Afr./Br. = Am./Sp. papaya

Carica papaya

papaye

pea

“*bean”, “*bambarra bean”

peanut

“*groundnut”

peg

short piece of wood;

1) driven into ground to tether animals – “picket-peg”;

2) for fastening frames, tuning instruments etc.;

3) in flesh for decoration – “lip-peg”

pelt

1) (n.) see “*hair”

2) (v.) i) rain heavily, “pour”

ii) run fast and wildly

pepper

unmarked, the common hot, red pepper used generally in tropical seasoning (also “bird pepper”, “chili/chillies”, “cayenne”

Capsicum annuum longum (carrot-shaped) or

Capsicum annuum cerasiforme (small, round

“cherry pepper”

piment

The ordinary black and white pepper of European and American cuisine is not used

poivre

There are at least two indigenous black(ish) peppers found in local markets:

i) *afmomum melagneta*

i) *manignette, graine de paradis*

ii) *Xylopiya aethiopica*

ii) *fausse manignette*

both are also called *poivre de Guinée* and one or both “Guinea grains” ?? (further info)

The Mediterranean “sweet-/bell-pepper”, “pimento”, “capsicum”

Capsicum annuum grossum

This is probably only used by expatriates/évolués, not in local lgs. – dried, ground form, “paprika” also not W.Afr.

pigeon

Normal modern Eng. term. Domestic pigeons kept for meat; wild ones hunted and sometimes kept as cage-birds

pigeon

“dove” is archaic, poetical and (except in ornithological compounds “ring-dove”, “turtle-dove”) tends to refer to white, domestic pigeon. Gh. generally “dove”

(pronounced [dɔv] – [dɔ:v])

colombe, tourterelle

[N.B. – there is no -d- in pigeon!]

piss

“*urine”

pitcher

Am. (Br.obs.)

“*jug”, “*pot”

(2) Am. = ‘bowler in baseball’ unlikely in WA)

pito

Locally brewed beer, usually from guineacorn (sorghum, red millet)

dolo (also *bière de mil* : *tchapalot* in Togo)

‘akpeteshie’ (Gh.) is a locally distilled gin

?? other Afr., Fr. (*sodabi*?)

“schnapps” – distilled liquor, usually manufactured.

W.Afr. ‘koikai’

Fr.??

“palm wine” intoxicant from sap of raphia palm

vin de palme, Bandji/Bangui

“*palm”

plaster

1) see “*mortar (2)”

2) Br./Gh. adhesive elastic surgical dressing. Am.

“bandaid”. Br. also “sticky-/sticking-plaster, patch”.

? *sparadrap*

pluck

1) “entrails, guts” see “*belly”

tripes

2) slightly obs. informal for “courage, bravery”

courage

pocketbook

“*sack”

'pomade'
 "*make-up"

porridge
 "*t.z."

post
 heavy vertical member of a building, fence (often planted in the ground)
poteau
 "*beam"

pot
 Eng. has this word for all types (with qualifiers *e.g.* "water__"). It may be handy in W.Afr. lexicography to distinguish "(clay) pot" from "(metal) pan". Any "pan" too big for this term to seem happy, use "cauldron". Local lgs. will probably have many words for special types (*cf.* Lexinote 13 (forthc.)).

pot
 simple "pot" may well elicit "cooking pot"
marmite

A water jar (avoid "*jar" and "*jug" in English)
canari (note f.a. .. not a "canary"!!)

These or pot may be used with modifiers for special types ("water-pot", "pito-pot")
 Pot "built in" with fire beneath (esp. for "*pito") can be called a "vat"

cave
 An open-mouthed vessel (height being less than diameter) is a "bowl" – often of clay, hemispherical (*e.g.* "*t.z. bowl"), also "basin", "dish"

bol, cuvette, also *jatte, cahotte*
 (I am not aware that the former is a particularly f.a., but in most wordlists I see the latter)

There may be names for different types of bowl – aluminium or enamel, used for a measure in the market (e.g. for cereals, beans).

Collective name for pots, pans and crockery has no exact English equivalent (trade "hollow-ware"), also for dishes to wash up see "*wash"

(la) vaiselle "*kettle"

[for some drawings and one French scholars' glosses, see Manessy, 1960 "Tâches quotidiennes et travaux saisonniers en pays bwa : Dakar" – pp 1045, plates I – III]

potash, potassium
 "*spice-water"

potato
 "*yam", "*fracra potato"

potto
 "*bush-baby"

poultry
 "*fowl"

praise singer
 Professional musician-cum-beggar, sings praises of rich benefactors either on a regular patron/client basis or 'on spec.'

griot
 The Fr. *griot* is also sometimes used in Eng. as a loan word.

pregnancy
W. Afr. pigin 'belly' ('she get belly' – "she is pregnant")
grossesse
 "pregnant (woman)"
enceinte
 W.Afr.Fr. may use 'ventre-Madame' for a woman's internal reproductive organs (vs. *ventre-tout-le-monde* – "*belly")
 *belly, *birth

pubic
 "pubic area" of front of body just above genitalia
[med. "pubis"]
bas-ventre
 for local lg., the "pubic-hair" of this area may be differentiated by sex "male-genitals hair"/"female-genitals hair"
poils de bas-ventre?
 "*belly"

pumpkin
 "*calabash"

purlin
 Horizontal member of roof-frame.
Fr.??
 "*rafter"

purse
 "*sack"

quarter
 1) Br. = "one-fourth" Am
quart
 2) section of "*town"
quartier
 3) Am. 25-cent coin

quern
 "*grindstone"

rabbit
 We usually follow Gh. and call the local "Cape/Togo hare" 'rabbit'
Lepus capensis zechi, Lepus togolensis
lièvre (> lapin)
 "Crawshays' hare" has very short ears, dark colour
Lepus crawshayi
 "*hyrax"

rafter

member of roof frame vertically from eaves to ridge. May be a verb 'to rafter'
chevron ?

rain

Usually "it is raining" = 'rain rains': "thunder" may be 'rain rumbles', "lightning" 'rain flashes' etc.

("rainbow" = 'rain knife' or 'chameleon's knife/bow' or ...?). Some Fr. therefore translate "rain" as "(sky as) producer of atmospheric phenomena" (ciel producteur des phénomènes atmosphériques)

Why not verbs i) "to thunder", ii) "to lighten, flash", iii) "to rain", and noun iv) "rain"?

i) tonner; ii) éclairer; iii) pleuvoir; iv) pluie
"rainy season"

saison des pluies; (BF) hivernage

There is often one word for "sky" in the ordinary sense, and "cloud/s" (which may be compounds including "rain").

rat

Various mice and rats, consult specialist works if several names are given.

"giant rat"

Cricetomys gambianus

rat géant/de Gambie

"giant rat" = 'rabbit', ("rat" = 'rat')

"cane/palm rat" see "**grasscutter"

(aulacode)

Shrews have thin pointed snouts, are fierce and have a bad smell. N.B. big, black "(Giffard's) giant shrew"

Crocidura giffardi

musaraigne géant ??

"*squirrel", "*mongoose", grasscutter

ratel

also "honey-badger", stout, short-tailed animal; back black, white below

Mellivora capensis

ratel

rattle

"*shaker"

rectum

"*bottom (2)"

reedbuck

antelope : reedbuck

relation

"relationship", logical or grammatical connection

rapport

a family member ("he is a relation of mine") see "**kin"

parent

[≠ "**parent", f.a.]

the telling of a narrative

récit

relative

"relative to -" = "compared with, by the standard of"
vis-à-vis

(Gram.) sentence used as a nominal modifier or NP
relatif

"kinsman, relation" see "**relation 2)", "**kin"

riddle

Verbal-art entertainment genre where someone proposes a 'definition' or 'paraphrase' from which other/s must guess the intended object.

devinette

(f.a. – cf. "**soothsayer" for divination)

roach

"*cockroach"

roan

antelope : roan

roast

"*cook"

room

In a "compound" "house", a single enclosed unit. May be a separate "hut", or one partitioned section of a range of buildings according to architectural style.

case

In counting number of rooms in a range use

pièce

Otherwise, *pièce* and *salle* are inappropriate translations.

rooster

"*fowl"

rope-plant

Hemp and other plants grown or found wild – the fibrous skin of the stalk is used for the making of rope.

also "kenaf"

Hibiscus cannabinus

chanvre

rosella

sorrel grown for vinegary leaves and calices

Hibiscus sabdariffa

oseille (de Guinée); da

rubbish

W.Afr./Br. – Am. = "trash, garbage"

ordures

"rubbish-heap(/-dump)" ('midden' anthro.)

tas d'ordures

sack (1)

Br. = Am. "burlap bag" (material Am. "burlap" is Br. "sacking")

Fr. *sac* is f.a. being "bag" in general – needs a distinguisher (??what) to mean specifically "sack".

Other bags – specify material: "string-bag", "skin-

/leather-bag”...

(? sac en corde (?)/ cuir ...)

Small bags in which esp. women carry around personal possessions is

- i) “handbag” Br. – in Am. “purse” (in Br. this Am. =
- ii) “coin purse”,) or “pocketbook” (if this term is used in Br. it is a synonym of
- iii) “wallet” = Am. “billfold”).

i) sac à main; ii) portemonnai; iii) portefeuille

Br. “wallet” (obs.) or “satchel” is a smallish bag on a shoulder-(/waist-) strap.

besace, saccoche

“*load”

‘sack’ (2)

Used in Gh. for “to dismiss, divorce, send away” a person

sand

Gh. may = “mud/earth (e.g. for building), concrete”
“*mortar”

sansa

“*fiddle”

sasswood

poison used in “*ordeals” in western areas, from (what part of??) following trees:

Erythrophleum guineense, E. worense

Fr??

sauce

“*soup”

sceptre

purely ceremonial rod, symbolic of authority

sceptre ?

schnapps

“*pito”

scythe

“*sickle”

sesame

also “benniseed, benneseed”

Pennisetum spp.

sésame

shade-porch

My own term for a shady bower made of stout sticks with matting and farm-residues as roof, perhaps also walls. Free-standing (attached to room would be “veranda”).

auvent (de branchages) ; apatam (< ?) in Tg.

Any other terms in use? (*? abri* (M) but this v. general)

shaker

also “rattle”. Musical instrument consisting of a hollow container with small objects (seeds, stones) inside [occasionally on a net over the outside], shaken to give a

rhythmic rattling (cf. Sp. maraccas).

(‘castagnettes’) is W.Afr. (? Cameroon) and f.a.

metropolitan Fr. = Eng. “castanets” = instrument where two objects, originally wooden, are clicked or rattled together.

“sistrum” is loose disks e.g. Bottle-tops threaded inwire in a frame (thechnical musicological term)

Fr. ??

shea

(pron. like “shear” in r-less Eng. dialects)

Tree

Butyrospermum parkii

karité

yields fruits

fruits de karité

from the fruits “shea nuts” are extracted

amandes de karité

[may be a non-related lexeme in local lg.]

From the shea nuts the vegetable oil “shea butter” is made (so-called because it is yellowish white and solid at local shade temperatures).

beurre de karité

shirt

Gh. any tailored garment going over the shoulders (cf “*cloth 1”). Western-style, traditional “smock” (various lengths and fullnesses) or Muslim-style long “gown” or “robe”

chemise, boubou

(?? is this “smock”, “robe”, or both?)

shit

“*faeces”

shop

“*store”

shrew

“*rat”

sibling

Cover-term for brothers-and-sisters (sex irrelevant).

Technical term of socio-/anthropo-logy. Useful in lexicography in languages which don’t distinguish sex ?? *French equivalent??*

Lg. may contrast “older/younger sibling” (Gh.

“senior/junior (brother)”

ainé(e)/cadet(te)

and/or “same/different sex”

frère/soeur d’un homme

sickle

short, curved blade in short handle, for cutting grasses or cereal; usually the grasses to be cut are held by the other hand (or a short hooked stick). [Eng. rural

“bill/bagging/fagging hook”]

faucille

“Scythe” has a long handle and cuts grasses near the

ground without the operator stooping, probably not found in the area.

faux

Grass also cut with a “cutlass” (not with a “grass-cutter”!)

silk-cotton tree

“*kapok tree”

sister

“*sibling”

sistrum

“*shaker”

sitatunga

antelope : sitatunga

skink

“*lizard”

sky

“*rain”

sledge(-hammer)

“*mallet”

smash

1) Gh. ‘smash’ = “mash” (esp. solid into liquid)

délayer

2) colloq. “break something” (violently)

casser

soccer

Game Br./W.Afr. “football”, W.Afr. vernacular also “ball”

football

Vehicle type, see “*lorry”

soda-ash

“*spice-water”

soil

“*earth”

soothsayer

Gh. for person who uses bag of sticks, bones etc. to decide the (supernatural) cause of sickness *etc.*

Anthropologists say “diviner”.

devin (- better than B.F. ‘*charlatan*’ or ‘*sorcier*’ (derog.))

“sorceror” is influenced by ‘*sorcier*’

For “witch-doctor”, see “*witch”, “*medicine (-man)”

The “earth-priest” is the officiant of an earth-cult, often centred on a spring, rock outcrop or group of trees – “grove”

chef/maître de la terre

sorcerer, sorcery

“*witch”

sorghum

“*guineacorn”

sorrel

“*rosella”

soup

(Gh.) stew:- The main meal is usually a staple, stodge (“*fufu” or “*t.z.”) plus a spicy sauce of varying thickness and ingredients.

sauce

Sometimes the same word means “soup ingredients” (approx. equivalent to “vegetables” or “greens”)

feuilles (etc.) pour la sauce

‘spice-water’

(alkali, ‘lye’) :Gh. cornstalks are burned and the ashes soaked in water, which is filtered to yield an alkaline solution used in cooking and soap-making.

potasse (alimentaire)

(“soda-ash”, ??other Eng.)

? *terasse*

spoil

1) “to go bad/ rotten/ off” esp. of foodstuffs

se gâter (?)

2) to cause something to be bad, trans. of 1), or “spoil the fun/party/...”, or “spoil a child” (by over-indulgence)

gâter

3) ‘spoil’ Gh. for the above and also “break down, be broken/ruined/destroyed” and trans. “break, destroy”

détruire, abîmer

squash

esp Am., edible gourd – see “*calabash”

To be avoided in wordlists because of homography with verb “squash”

squirrel

Var. spp., less bushy tails than Am./Br. squirrel, more like chipmunk. May be spotted or striped. May live on ground > trees in savanna.

écureuil

Small “sun-squirrels”

Helioscirus spp.

Fr??

larger “ground-squirrel”

Xerus spp. esp (as eaten) Xerus erythropus

Fr??

‘rat’, *rat palmiste*

[Eng. “palmist” is a fortune-teller – see “*soothsayer”!]

“*bush-cats”, “*grasscutter”, “*mongoose”, “*rat”

stew

1) n. – see “*soup”;

2) vb. – see “*cook”

stick

Piece of wood (may or may not be the same word as “tree” in vernacular lg.).

Different types : be as specific as possible/necessary:-
“*beam”; “*bush-stick”; “*cane”; “*chewing-stick”; “*club”;
“*dibble”; “*firewood”; “*flail”; “*forked stick”; “*handle”;
“*hurdle”; “*kindling”; “*log”; “*peg”; “*post”; “*purlin”;
“*rafter”; “*sceptre”; “*stump”; “*throwing-stick”; “*timber”;
“*walking stick”; “*wattle (-and daub)”; “*whisk”; “*whip”;
“*wood”; “*woodwork”

stomach

“*belly”

store

1) Am. = Br. “shop”. Gh. uses both esp. “store” : unlikely to be a vernacular term (vs. “market” – *marché*)

magasin, boutique

2) To store, save, put away, see “*keep”

3) For agric. produce, see “*granary”

‘storey-building’

Gh. modern-style building with an upstairs (or multi-storey)

stranger

Gh. – person from somewhere else.

either “foreigner”

étranger

or “guest”

hôte

(are these equivalents in W.Afr.Fr.??) May also = “host” – *hôte* – or this may be “s.-owner”, “s.-receiver”

stump

broken stick, or remains of a fallen tree – often the cause of injuries

tronçon, souche

sweet

the local word and local Eng. may mean “nice, tasty” in general, not just “sweet like sugar”

de bon gout

vs. *doux, sucré*

swish

Gh. (obsol.?)

“*mortar 2)”

switch

“*cane 1)”

sword

A long knife specifically for warfare (as opposed to the agricultural “*cutlass”) is probably not indigenous to the area, and may be a loan word, Hs. *takobi etc.*

?*glaive?*; *épée*

talisman

“*amulet”

tannia

“*cocoyam”

taro

“*cocoyam”

‘tea-kettle’

“*kettle”

Am.

throwing-stick

designed for throwing at hunters’ game

bâton de jet

thunder

“*rain”

tiger

“*bush-cats”, “*leopard”, “*hyaena”

tigernut

small shrivelled looking softish “nut” (actually the rhizome or corm of the plant) with sweet, milky juice: often the juice is sucked (or for cooking, extracted) and the fibrous remainder is spat/thrown out.

Cyperus esulentus

Fr??

timber

(Br. = Am. “lumber”) sawn wood used for carpentry work

bois de construction/charpente(rie)/menuiserie

“*bush-stick”

tin (-can)

“*can”

tizet

American mistaken written form for “*t.z.” not recognising “zed” as letter “z” (Am. “zee”)

toilet

1) personal dressing, grooming etc. – usually with pronoun e.g. “making his toilet”

toilette

“*make-up”, “*wash”

2) place to excrete, W.C

toilettes

“*faeces”, “*wash”

tooth stick

“*chewing-stick”

tortoise

Br. distinguishes “tortoise”, the dry land animal, and “turtle”, living in the water. Am. calls both “turtle” (“land-/box-turtle” vs. “water-turtle”).

Fr. calls both 'tortoise'
tortue
tortue-de-mer/-des-eaux

tough

1) Adj. Br./Am. physically strong, Gh. fat, thickset
2) "a tough", "tough-guy" – colloq. "ruffian"
apache
(?something more modern/African ??)

town

"town"
ville
"village"
village
["hamlet" – very small, rural settlement]
hameau
Local Eng. use of these 3 terms and local language terms may not correspond to European intuitions.
'town' may be "town-centre" (vs. "suburbs")
centre-ville
"Quarter" (see also "**compound") is a section of a bigger town.
quartier
(in one area of Gh. "village" is used for this.
zongo (Ha.) is a quarter for a particular ethnic or other group. [Lexinote 7, section 6, pp 9 ff.]

trash

"*rubbish"

tree types

tree types : commercial/cultivated ... entries following

tree : commercial/cultivated : avocado (pear) (tree)

Gh. 'pear' (pron. 'pleɛ')
Persen indica
avocatier

tree : commercial/cultivated : banana (tree – palm)

bananièr
also "plantain (tree/palm)"
banane-plantain

tree : commercial/cultivated : cashew (tree)

Anacardium occidentale
anacardièr
The fruit to which the nut is attached is eaten. ??name.
Eng./Ghana lg. may be "Whiteman's groundnut"

tree : commercial/cultivated : cocoa (tree)

cacaoyer

tree : commercial/cultivated : coffee (bush)

Coffea robusta, Coffea arabica, C. spp.
caféièr

tree : commercial/cultivated : guava (tree)

Psidium guajava
?gouavièr
fruit of the guava
gouave

tree : commercial/cultivated : kola (tree)

Cola nitida, Cola acuminata
colatier
"kola"

tree : commercial/cultivated : mango (tree)

Mangifera indica
manguier
Fruit "mango/mangoes"
mangue

tree : commercial/cultivated : mangosteen

Garcinia mangostana
Fr??

tree : commercial/cultivated : palm trees

palmièr
"palm"

tree : commercial/cultivated : pawpaw

Carica papaya
Fr??
fruit
papaye
"pawpaw"

tree : commercial/cultivated : tamarind

Tamarindus indica
tamarinier

tree : Miscellaneous ; bamboo

bambou

tree : Miscellaneous ; flamboyant, flame tree

Delonix regia
? flamboyant

tree : Miscellaneous ; mangrove

Rhizophora spp.
Fr??

tree : Miscellaneous ; monkey match, African mistletoe

parasite of trees, flower with red tip
Fr??

tree : Miscellaneous ; neem, nim

Azadirachta indica
Fr??

tree : Miscellaneous ; umbrella tree

Musanga cecropoides
Fr??

tree : savannah ; acacia

Acacia spp.
?acacia?
Acacia albida
balanza

tree : savannah ; ackee apple

Blighia sapida
finzan
“*ackee apple”

tree : savannah ; annona

(fruit like soursop)
Annona senegalensis
?annona

tree : savannah ; bauhinia

Bauhinia spp
bauhinia
(camel's foot tree)
Bauhinia rufescens

tree : savannah ; bush-grapes

Lannea microcarpa
Lannea
“*bush-grapes”

tree : savannah ; dawadawa

Parkia biglobosa/clappertonia
nééré
“*dawadawa”

tree : savannah ; Diospyros

Diospyros mespiliformis
néflier ; (ébénier?)
“*Diospyros”

tree : savannah ; ebony

Vitex cienkowskii
vitex
“*ebony”

tree : savannah ; fig

Ficus spp.
ficus
“*fig”

tree : savannah ; kapok

Ceiba and Bombax spp.
Fromager
kapokier
“*kapok”

tree : savannah ; mahogany

“*tree : timber ; mahogany”, “*mahogany”

tree : savannah ; shea

Butyrospermum parkii
karité
“*shea”

tree : savannah ; soap-berry

Balaenites aegyptiaca
?Balaenites

tree : timber : Afrormosia

“*tree: timber: satinwood”

tree : timber : camwood

(red dye)
Baphia nitida, Baphia pubescens
Fr??

tree : timber : Canthium

tall, flat topped, black bark, ants on trunk
Canthium vulgare
Fr??

tree : timber : dahoma

Piptia doniastrum africanum

tree : timber : ebony

?*Vitex?* **Diospyros*
ébénier
“*ebony”

tree : timber ; iroko

Chlorophora excelsa
Fr??

tree : timber ; mahogany

forest mahogany
Khaya ivorensis (Dubini)
savannah mahogany
Khaya coregalensis
caïlcédra
“*mahogany”

tree : timber ; obeche

softish obeche/wawa timber
Triplochiton spp.
obèche??

tree : timber ; sapele

good quality veneers
Entandrophragma aylindricum
sapele utile
Emantophragma utile

tree : timber ; satinwood

Afrormosia laxiflora
Fr??

tribe

Tends to be derog. in W.Afr., either implying “primitive” or associated with “tribalism” – disruptive influence in modern multi-ethnic state.

tribu

Use “ethnic group”

éthnie

Often “group”, “people”, “local (people/customs)”, “vernacular (language/culture)” can be used in place of this cumbersome phrase

[Note : In America, Britain, “ethnic” has become derog. by being used as a euphemism : non-liberal WAS may use e.g. “ethnic music” as ‘(funny, weird) noises appreciated by blacks, immigrants...’]

trousers

“*pants”

tummy

“*belly”

turban

“*head-tie”

turkey-buzzard

“*vulture”

turtle

“*tortoise”

t.z.

Staple consisting of a thick porridge of cereal (traditionally usually millet). Eng. name is a schoolboy abbreviation of Ha. *tuon zafi* “hot food” – pronounced “tee zed” (letter “z” is “zed” in Br./W.Afr., vs. “zee” in Am.). Also “grain-food”, “porridge”.

tô, flan/pâte de mil, bouillie

Thinner forms are also made for snacks – “gruel” – sometimes Gh. ‘koko’ (not = “cocoa” f.a.!!)

Fr.?? [?use bouillie for this?]

for other staples, see “*fufu”, “*kenkey”, “*gari”

uncle

uncle, aunt – Parent’s siblings are very likely to be contrasted as to mothers’/fathers’ side: “uncle (maternal)/Mothers’ brother” (or in technical pubs. – “uncle (MoBro)”) vs. “uncle (paternal)/Fathers’ brother (FaBro)”

oncle/tante

oncle maternel/paternel; tante maternelle/paternelle

“*kin”

urine, urinate

May be more acceptable both in lexicography and in local Eng./Fr. than in everyday Eng.

urine(r)

“piss”

pisser

these are somewhat obs., but may be less so in local Eng./Fr. “*faeces”

uterine

Technical (anthropology) for “relatives on the mothers’ side/ calculated through female succession”

Fr??

“*kin”, “*uncle”

If used, cross-ref. from “mother”

vegetables

“*soup”

veil

“*head-tie”

veranda

“*shade porch”

village

“*town”

vine

Am. uses this for various floppy plants – peas, beans, pumpkins etc. grow in “vines”. Br. mainly “(grape-) vine” or stringy, non-productive forest creepers (Tarzan swinging on vines cf. Am/Sp. “liana”).

vigne (??range)

violin

“*fiddle”

Vitex

“*ebony”

vulture

W. Afr./Br.; Am “(turkey-)buzard”. Large, carrion-eating bird of prey with featherless head/neck

charognard

(sometimes ‘f.’a. *vautour*)

‘waist’

Gh. “lumbar region, (lower) back” : [Lexinote 12, forthc.]

ceinture

reins

(*lombes, lombaire, region lombaire* ??)

walking-stick

canne à marcher

see also “*cane 1)”

wallet

“*sack”

warthog

The wild pig of the savanna, also “bush-pig”

Phacochoerus aethiopicus

phacochère

(ctd.)

“Giant forest hog”

Hyloch meinertzhageni

hylochère, sanglier (rare)

“Western bush-pig”/“red river-hog” – forest and forest/savanna border

Potamoch porcus p.

potamochère

wash

“wash” can be used for anything including parts of the body

(se) *laver*

“bathe” is for bathing the whole body (Eng. “bathe” is also the careful washing of a damaged body-part).

(se) *baigner*

[f.a. *lavement* is “enema”, (act of) “washing” is *lavage*] Local lg. may have other special terms according to the thing being washed:

“Laundry” is i) washing clothes, or ii) clothes to wash, or iii) place to wash clothes

i) *lessive*, ii) *linge (à blanchir)*, iii) *blanchisserie*

Washing pots, pans and crockery is Am. Eng. “do (/wash) the dishes”, in Br. “wash up” (the latter means “wash oneself” in Am.)

faire/laver la vaisselle

‘lavatory’ is i) “washroom”, place to wash yourself in Am., but ii) ‘W.C., toilet, latrine’ in Br. (somewhat obsol.)

i) *lavabo (is “wash-basin/-stand”)*, ii) *W.C., cabinets, toilettes, lavabos*

“bathroom” is a place to wash yourself. (Am. may be “W.C. etc.”, also ‘restroom’, ‘mens’/ladies’ room’)

salle de bain(s)

“*bowl” ; “*fæces”

waterbuck

antelope : waterbuck

wattle (-and daub)

light framework of woven sticks used in walling (daubed with clay)

claié ?

weaver-bird

various spp.; common type (yellow, noisy, big colonies)

“village weaver”

Ploceus cucullatus

tisserin (gendarme)

wedding

“*marriage”

weed

1) n. Plant growing where the speaker doesn’t want it. Afr., like Fr., may just say ‘(bad) grass’.

mauvaises herbes

2) v. To remove the same – see “*hoe”

3)

weevil

Strictly a beetle with a long “nose”. In common parlance, any small beetle-type insect infesting dry foods such as flour, beans.

charançon

whip

flexible stick for beating people/animals/things.

fouet

“to whip, whisk”

fouetter

“*cane 2)”, “*whisk”

whisk

1) fly-whisk – usually an animal tail

(fouet à mouches??)

multi-branched stick or bunch of twigs for agitating liquides as in cooking

fouet

“*whip”

whitflow

“*boil (3)”

wife

“*marriage”

wind

1) moving air

vent

2) euph. “break wind” may be either “belch” [n./v.] (through mouth), or “fart” [n./v.] (rectum). These may be felt to be unprintable, and may wrongly imply taboo or at least mildly indecent status for the local word. [what would you look for them under??] Med. “flatulence” is strictly the condition of internal gas, not its release.

vents (m.pl.); rot, roter; pet, péter; flatulence

?same stylistic/sense comments as “wind”, “flatulence”?

“Eructation” for “belch” (n.) is obs. or v. formal (?same as Fr. *eructer/-tation?*); “borborygmy” obs., regional.

witch

African “witchcraft” usually involves the idea that the witch ‘flies’ at night to ‘eat’ the ‘souls’ of victims who then sicken and/or die. May be involuntary/unknown to the witch her/himself, discovered by a diviner (see “*soothsayer”).

sorcière/sorcier/sorcellerie

Eng. “witch” and many Afr. cultures, the basic word means a female – use “witch”/“(male) witch” (“wizard”, “warlock” confuse the issue) and it is better to confine this and the Fr. to this precise sense : the corresponding Eng. “sorcerer”, “sorcery” is pejorative and imprecise; both tend to imply a deliberate practice, while Afr. witchcraft does not.

“witchdoctor” is derog. for all sorts of traditional religious practitioners (and even herbal medicine experts). should only be used for a person with a special “medicine” (see “*medicine”, also “*fetish”) for detecting

witchcraft and/or annulling its effects in the witch and/or victim.

Fr??

wolf

“*hyaena”

woman

“*marriage”

wood

mass noun in Eng./Fr.

bois

[count = small forest:- Eng. pl. = Fr. sg = Am. pl.

form/sg. syntax – “some woods”/le bois (de

Boulogne...)/“a woods”

one stick is a “(piece of) wood”

(pièce de) bois

woodwork

1) the wooden frame of a building

charpente

2) things made of wood, carpentry, joinery

menuiserie

word

“*palaver”

W.C

“*wash”

xylophone

Musical instrument where the sound is produced by hitting bars of wood (“keys”- *Fr ??*) on a frame (usually with resonators *e.g.* gourds).

balafon

Musician uses “xylophone-stick” or “beater”

Fr??

yam

1) Am. = WAfr./Br. “sweet potato”

ipomoea batata

patate (douce)

(f.a. for regular, ‘Irish’ “potato” = *pomme de terre*)

2) The African yam

Dioscorea esculentum

igname

Planted in “yam-mounds”

Fr??

The “*vines” are supported by “yam-sticks”

Fr??

It is used to make “*fufu”

“*cassava”, “*cocoyam”, “*Frafra potato”

yantia

“*cocoyam”

zebu

“*cow”

zinc

corrugated metal roofing

tôle ondulée

“*pan”

zither

Musical instrument of strings stretched over a box (no neck, see “*fiddle”)

cithare

[BF *guitare*, but see “*fiddle”]

zongo

“*town”

zorilla

Animal in all ways like the Am. skunk

Ictonyx striatus

zorille

FRENCH/English VOCABULARY

<i>abuser</i> insult	v.		
<i>'agouti'</i> grasscutter	n.m.?	<i>aulacode</i> 'grasscutter'	n.m.?
<i>ainé(e)</i> sibling	n.m.,f.	<i>auto</i> 'lorry'	n.f.
<i>alligator</i> crocodile	n.m.	<i>babouin</i> baboon	n.m.
<i>amande</i> nut. shea also (not in this region?) "almond"	n.f.	<i>bagages</i> 'load' [anglophones, note spelling!]	n.pl, m.
<i>amant(e)</i> marriage	n.m.,f.	<i>balafon</i> xylophone	n.m.
<i>ami(e)</i> (1) friend (2) boy/girl-friend marriage	n.m.,f.	<i>balanza</i> acacia sp. : trees	n.m.?
<i>amulette</i> amulet	n. f.	<i>banco</i> 'swish' : mortar (2)	n.m.?
<i>anacarde</i> cashew nut	n.m.	<i>baobab</i> baobab :	n.m. [vrai ami!]
<i>anacardier</i> cashew tree : trees, cashew	n.m.	<i>bas-ventre</i> belly; pubic	n.m.
<i>ane(sse)</i> donkey	n.m.,f.	<i>bateau</i> boat	n.m.
<i>antilope</i> antelope	n.f.	<i>Bauhinia</i> Bauhinia: tree sp.	n.m.?
<i>anus</i> bottom	n.m.	<i>bâton(net)</i> stick ~ de --- , ~ à ---	n.m.
<i>arachide</i> groundnut q.v.	n.f.	<i>beignet</i> bean-cake ; or other fried cakes	n.m.
<i>atmosphère, -sphérique</i> rain	n.f./adj.	<i>besace</i> sack	n.f.
<i>aubergine</i> n. f 'garden-egg'		<i>bidon</i> .can	n.m.
<i>aubergine indigène</i> bitter-tomato	n.f./ + adj.	<i>bière</i> pito, beer	n.f.
		<i>bois</i> stick un --- , --- de ~ , --- à ~ , --- en ~	n.m.[also [pl.] and [mass]]

boîte **n.f.**
(1) box
(2) can [(2) specifically “~ *en fer blanc*”]

bol **n.m.**
pot

bongo **n.m.?**
bongo :: antelope : bongo

bonnet **n.m.**
hat

boubou **n.m.?**
robe, shirt

bouc **n.m.**
he-goat ; billy-goat

‘*boule*’ **n.?**
fufu

bouillie **n.f.**
gruel ; porridge ;
t.z.

bouillir **v.**
boil ; cook

boyau(x) **n.m.(pl.)**
belly

braise **n.f.sg**
embers ; charcoal

brousse (la ~) **n.f.**
the ‘bush’ ; bush (the ~)

bubale **n.m.**
hartebeest: antelope : hartebeest

buffle **n.m.**
buffalo

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NOTES

¹ As the international languages which have to be used in the vast majority of cases to interact with speakers of the target languages, I use 'English and French' to typify the outside language in which the researcher may be working and publishing. Comparable effects will apply to German, but weaker as it is longer since the times of German colonial rule, and maybe if working in Arabic with some languages in Chad and Niger (but not, I think, any Gur language). Those working in Spanish, Russian Italian and so on, and Japanese, Chinese and Korean, will have increased difficulties through using these languages with the mediation of

English and French, but this situation will probably not add any new type of problem. Working in Hausa (not, presumably, Swahili in the Gur area) is an alternative; some of these problems will be obviated, but there may be the additional problem that one may elicit Hausa loans which may be used in the Gur language, to the exclusion of perfectly valid native terms which will be of more value for comparison.

² “This compilation” was produced in fascicles but got stuck at English “malt”, French merely a sample page which is given below. It “is a companion to a series of ‘lexinotes’ discussing lexical areas in the Western Oti/Volta subgroup of Gur languages (*voltaïques*) which may cause problems in the comparison of wordlists and vocabularies.” (For Lexinotes, also stalled, see Naden 1993, forthc.). Some copies of what has been done so far can be obtained from the author at P.O.Box TM 524, Techiman, B/A.R., Ghana.

³ I am assuming a researcher in the field, without access to university library reference resources!

⁴ Substituting the name of a distinctive South American group of crocodilians for the African group.

⁵ “Lemma” (pl. “lemmata”) is a lexicographical term for the form of the keyword or entry word - the thing you actually look up.

⁶ A translation equivalent should be substitutable for the target item in all or most contexts, and so should be stylistically as well as semantically appropriate: it may be a multi-word item (or one word even where the target is multi-word). A gloss is a single-word or very short phrase which gives an idea of the core meaning of the target: readers familiar with the type of target language may have a good idea of the sort of semantic extensions such a sense may undergo. A definition in the sense I am using the term in bilingual glossing is an explanation of the target word’s referent and/or usage.

⁷ As the French words will not necessarily appear in the English-French section in alphabetical order, it is methodologically impossible to prepare the full French listing, which is basically an index to the encyclopædic section, until all the fascicles of the latter have been completed.

⁸ *bouc/boucs* - this is one of the items proving that French is a Gur language - cf. Kusaal **buug/buus**.

Compare also *bébé/bébés* with KL **bibil/bibis** “small child”.