

THE WEST KAINJI LANGUAGES

of

NORTHWESTERN NIGERIA

I: Nomenclature and subclassification

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DRAFT ONLY [Still missing some maps]

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1. Introduction

The West Kainji languages are a set of some sixteen languages or lects spoken in northwestern Nigeria. Because of their extremely diverse lexicon and morphology, it is only comparatively recently that their unity has been recognised. In 1919, Johnson (1919-22, I:732-746) noted that the noun-class systems of the 'Semi-Bantu' languages of northwestern Nigeria showed marked resemblances to those of the Bantu languages and published comparative wordlists linking Kamuku, Gurmana and Basa. Thomas (in Meek 1925, II:137) put many of the West Kainji languages into 'Nigerian Semi-Bantu' but joined Lopa and Laru with Bariba in 'Volta' i.e. Gur. In the 1950s, Westermann and Bryan (1952:70) largely followed Thomas, although recognising that Kambari, Hun-Saare [Duka], and possibly Kamuku and Lela [Dakakari] were grouped together. These languages were then listed in the catch-all category 'class languages' under the general heading of 'isolated units'. The recognition that the group now known as West Kainji forms a genetic unit is due to Bertho (1952:264-6) who asserted its coherence on the basis of unpublished wordlists. Bertho rejected the Gur affiliations of Lopa and Laru proposed by Thomas and stated that the affiliations of the '*groupe Kambari*' were with central Nigerian Plateau languages. A nearly simultaneous classification was proposed by Greenberg (1955) who created a large Plateau group encompassing what would now called East and West Kainji (as Plateau 1a and b) as well as Tarokoid and Jukunoid.

Rowlands (1962) first demonstrated the links between some languages of the Jos region with the Benue-Congo languages of northwestern Nigeria but proposed no clear genetic model. The division of Plateau 1 languages into Eastern and Western appears first in the appendix to the Index of Nigerian Languages (Hansford *et al.* 1976). This was based on a classification developed by Carl Hoffmann and distributed only in mimeo. Hoffman split Western Plateau into 1a and 1b, and his 1a includes the main groups of languages in north-western Nigeria. The term Kainji was informally introduced in the 1980s but was established in article on Plateau in the reference volume on Niger-Congo published at the end of the decade (Gerhardt 1989). The new information on Kainji in Gerhardt was based largely on an unpublished conference paper (Blench 1988), but no evidence was put forward to support the classification published. Since that date there has been a significant expansion of field data, most of it still in manuscript¹. The paper² provides an up-to-date survey of West Kainji languages. It begins by describing the locations of the languages and peoples, and attempts to disentangle some of the more egregious errors perpetrated in the literature. It then proposes a 'tree' of West Kainji based on shared lexical items. In view of major lacunae in the data on some languages this should be regarded as an interim study.

2. West Kainji: Languages and Subclassification

2.1 Sources of Data

As is all too common most African language work, the data on which a classification should be based has never been published. In almost all cases, it consists of wordlists, often orthographic and usually not marked for tone. The most valuable published source is the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist (henceforth BCCW) (Williamson & Shimizu 1968; Williamson 1972) although this omits many languages now known to exist. Table 1 shows the main sources, both published and in manuscript;

¹ I would like to thank Steve and Sonia Dettweiler for early access to a number of their valuable field reports on West Kainji languages (cited in the bibliography) and to Don Lindholm for giving me prompt access to them.

² The first version of this paper was prepared for the 18th Leiden Colloquium on African Languages, held in September, 1988. The original title was 'The Basa-Kamuku languages' and part of the paper discussed the system of noun-classes in Basa. In that form, it was circulated in Europe and Nigeria, but never published. Additional fieldwork was carried out in 1989 and 1992 by the author. In 1991, Clark Regnier of SIL, based in Ilorin, began a programme of survey of West Kainji languages. He made comments on my original paper and made available informally his survey results to me in Ilorin in April 1992. At that time we discussed a possible joint paper. Sadly, Clark was killed in a road accident shortly after that without any further progress. In view of his important contribution to West Kainji studies, I would like to dedicate this paper to his memory. For further acknowledgements see note on the text of the paper.

Table 1. West Kainji languages

Language Usual Name	Printed or Circulated Sources	Ms. Wordlists or Lexical Data
Reshe	Harris (1946), BCCW	Blench, Dettweiler
Laru, Lopa	--	Meek, Blench, Stark, Abrahall
Kambari	Hoffmann (1963, 1965), Crozier (1986), BCCW	Blench, Crozier, Lovelace, Mierau
Kamuku	Johnston (1919), Rowlands (1962), BCCW	Blench, Regnier, Dettweiler
Basa	Johnston (1919), Rowlands (1962), BCCW	Blench, Hyslop & Imo
Pongu group	Johnston (1919), Rowlands (1962), BCCW	Blench, Dettweiler, Regnier, MacDonell, Smith
Lela	Rowlands (1962), Hoffmann (1967), BCCW	Blench, Regnier, Dettweiler
Duka	Bendor-Samuel et al. (1973), Cressman & Skitch (1980), BCCW	Blench, Dettweiler, Regnier, Heath
Fakai group	Rowlands (1962)	Blench, Regnier
Gwamhi-Wuri	-	Regnier

The BCCW contains comparative materials on Kambari (2 dialects), Duka, Lela, Basa (2 dialects), Ura, Kamuku and Reshe.

2.2 Geographical Situation

The main concentration of the West Kainji languages is in northwestern Nigeria, immediately due south of the Hausa-speaking region. The most recent published map of this region is that accompanying Hansford et al. (1976) but this contains substantial inaccuracies. A general map of West Kainji languages is given in Map 1. The broader context of West Kainji languages is shown in the map accompanying Crozier and Blench (1992). A series of more detailed maps accompanies the sections on individual language groups. In administrative terms, this region until recently covered Niger and Sokoto States in the Federation of Nigeria. In late 1991, Sokoto State was divided in two, and a new State, Kebbi State, created covering the south and west of the former Sokoto State. Apart from the far-flung Basa, the West Kainji languages fall within the boundaries of the new Kebbi State and Niger State.

2.3 Classification

The group of languages called West Kainji were originally 'Plateau 1a' in the classification of Greenberg (1966). The following represents an attempt to provide the group with an internal structure, based on isoglosses. The evidence for these is given in the Appendix. Greenberg did not offer any further subdivision of Plateau 1a, but Hoffmann divided it into five subgroups as follows;

No.	Subgroup	Languages
i.	Upper Niger	Laru, Lopa
ii.	Reshe	Reshe
iii.	Kambari	Kambari cluster
iv.	Kamuku-Bassa	Ngwoi, Kamuku, Bassa, Gurmana, Baushi, Ura, Pongu
v.	Lela	Lela, Duka, Kag [=Fakai] cluster, Lyase

Williamson (1982:104) subclassifies a few West Kainji languages in relation to 'Plateau'. However, no modern classificatory work has dealt with the group as a whole from the point of view of subgrouping. The only recent overview of Plateau (Gerhardt 1989) follows Hoffmann (in Hansford et al., 1976), except where new information supplied by the writer of this paper is incorporated.

3. Principal Language Groupings

3.1 Reshe (Gungawa)

The Reshe people and language certainly represent the most divergent group in West Kainji. They are generally known in the ethnographic literature as 'Gungawa', from the Hausa term for 'island', they lived on the shores and islets of the Niger above Busa until the creation of Lake Kainji in 1974. They are described summarily in the ethnographic literature (Gunn & Conant 1960). From a lexical point of view, the language of the Reshe people is quite well-known, through the article of Harris (1946). More recent materials include the data in BCCW and a short grammar and conversational drills prepared by Boettger and Boettger (1967). Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1993b) have recently reviewed existing materials and analysed their newly collected field data. In terms of classification however, Greenberg (1963:40) admitted the position of Reshe was 'uncertain' and the available material shows clearly that it is by far the most divergent member of West Kainji, with many forms that do not resemble other members of the group.

3.2 Upper Niger (Laru and Lopa)

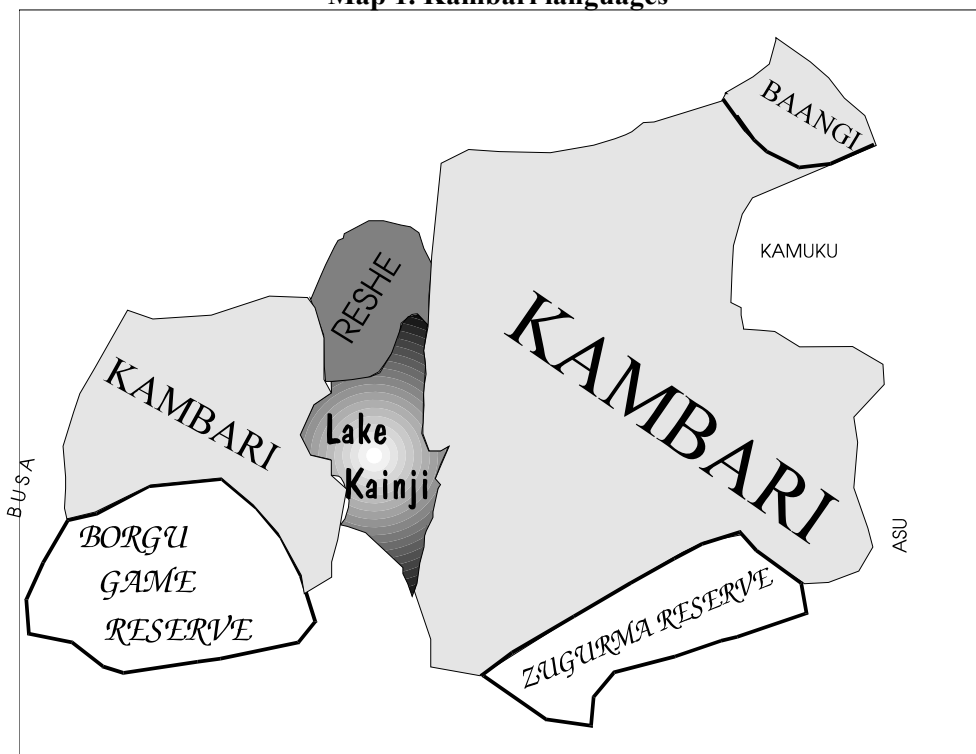
Like the Reshe, the Laru and Lopa are fishing peoples who live around the edge of Lake Kainji. Very little is known about their settlements and language, apart from comments in Reed *et al.* (1974), and passing references in ethnographic texts. It is clear that the creation of the lake in 1974 disrupted their settlement patterns. Short wordlists of the two languages were prepared by one of Meek's informants³. It is unlikely that either language has more than a few thousand speakers.

3.3 Kambari

The Kambari are perhaps the largest and certainly the most complex of the West Kainji subgroups (Map 1). Their languages have been studied more extensively than others in the group although much research has never been completely published. Kambari (Kamberi, Cumbri etc.) is an outsiders' name, but since there is no overall name for the group it is retained here. Present studies suggest that Kambari has two major divisions, usually referred to as Kambari I and II. These crudely correspond to east and west, but in some regions the two are territorially intertwined (Blench 1982).

³ A sketch of the phonology of Lopa is purportedly recorded in Adekunle (1986). However, comparison of lexical items in his text with the wordlists taken for Meek and by the author in 1992 (which substantially agree) reveals almost no resemblances. Since Adekunle provides no detail on the elicitation of his material, the wisest course is to eliminate this document from further consideration.

Map 1. Kambari languages



Koelle (1854) includes a wordlist of Kambari and very short Kambari texts were published as early as 1897 (see Hoffmann for further description and references). A manuscript by Mierau (1967) describes some aspects of the Agwara dialect, while the first modern linguistic studies of the Salka dialect (ciShingini) were carried out by Hoffman (1963, 1965, 1972). Crozier (1984) also studied the Salka dialect and our present view of the dialect situation derives from his unpublished fieldnotes. A wordlist of TsuVadi has been prepared by Lovelace (n.d.). Stark *et al.* (2003) have issued an orthographic dictionary of the Tsikimba dialect.

The table below shows the common names of the various Kambari sub-groups and the correct names of the people and language. The initial consonant of the root is marked with upper case.

Table 2. The Kambari languages

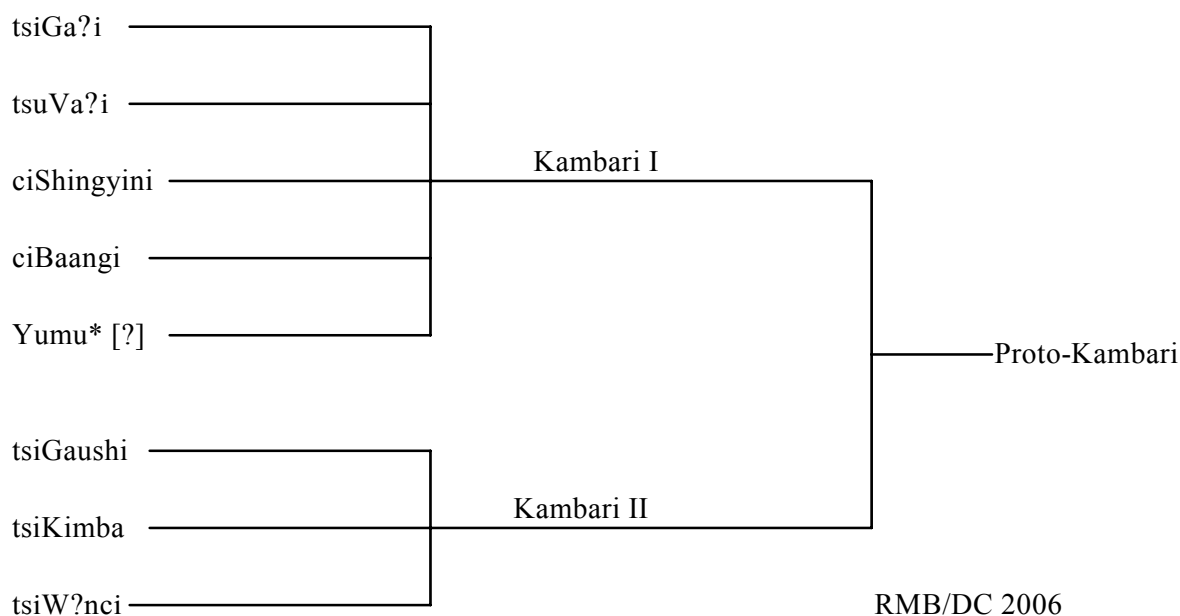
Usual Name	Other Names	One person	People	Language
Kambari I				
Agadi	Kakihum		aGadi	tsiGadi
Abadi, Evadi	Ibeto		aVadi	tsiVadi
Bangawa		vuBaangi	aBaangi	ciBaangi
	Salka	sShingini <i>or</i> mShingini	əShingini	ciShingini
Kambari II				
Agaushi	Auna, Wara		aGaushi	tsiGaushi
Kimba			aKimba	tsiKimba
Ngwunci	Agwara	maWunci	ηWenci	tsuWenci

Kimba is divided into at least three dialects; Auna, Yumu and Wara. There is a lect called Ashe spoken in Garafini, southwest of the lake proper. Ngwunci is divided into two dialects;

Agwara	masaweni	nsaweni	asaweni	tsusaweni
Rofia	məɓwəshi	nɓwəshi	aɓwəshi	tsuɓwəshi

Figure 1 gives a tentative subclassification of the Kambari cluster based on the unpublished lists of Crozier (p.c.).

Figure 1. Subclassification of the Kambari languages



Kambari is clearly distinguished from the other West Kainji languages by a pervasive system of long-short consonant distinctions found in initial position in noun-stems but medially in other word-classes.

There is a puzzle about the membership of the Kambari cluster. The Western Acipa language is usually considered part of the Kamuku cluster, along with the eastern Acipa (§3.x). The main source of data for this language is Dettweiler & Dettweiler (1995) which presents a comparative wordlist for three lects spoken in Kumbashi, Kakihum and Karisen towns. The original report pointed out that Western Acipa was so different from all the other languages in the group that it would be better to assign it to a separate branch. Stuart McGill (p.c.) has collected a large number of common glosses with the Kambari cluster and it may either be that this language has been misclassified and is in fact a Kambari cluster language or else it has come under extremely strong influence from Kambari (not impossible since the two languages are neighbours in Kakihum). However, Western Acipa has very different nominal prefixes from Kambari as well as

3.4 Basa-Kamuku

3.4 The Basa cluster

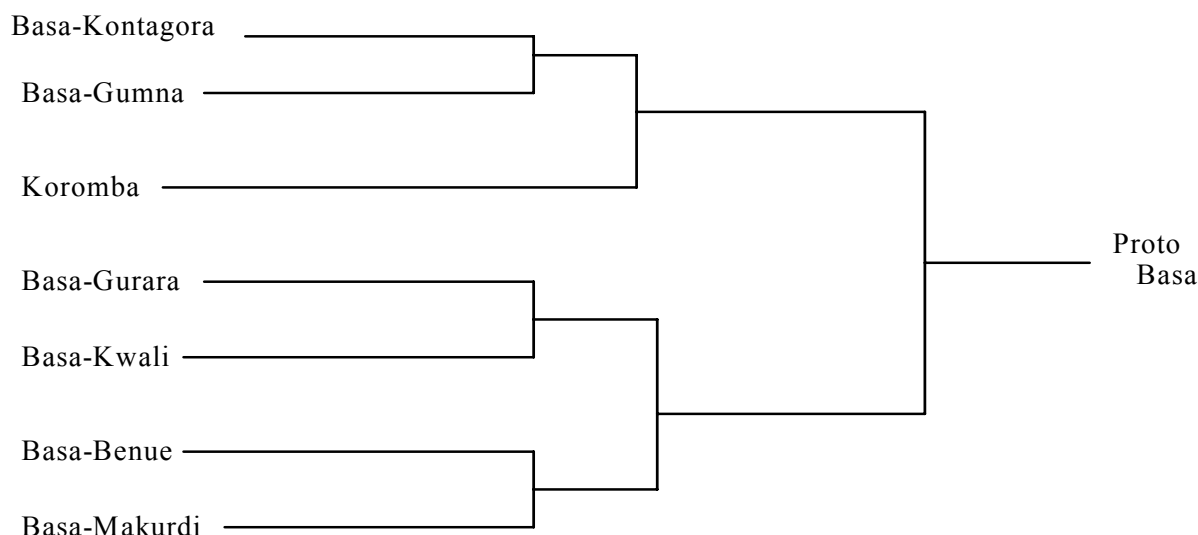
Apart from the Hausa and Fulbe, the Basa people may be the single most widespread group in the whole of Nigeria. The history of their dispersal remains to be written, but it is clear that their movement into the Benue Valley is relatively recent and may be a response to early nineteenth century slave-raiding. However, none of these scattered groups have any knowledge of the existence of the others, and no oral traditions relating to these migrations have yet been recorded. A curious paradox of this expansion is that it is only the outlying groups who have retained Basa language and culture. In what is presumably the heartland, backing on Kambari country, the Basa have virtually completely lost their language, and now speak only Hausa. Most Basa communities are known as 'Basawa' but in some places Basa refuse to answer to this name today.

The Basa languages should probably be treated as a language cluster. Following this research, there are probably seven groups as follows;

Basa-Kontagora
 Basa-Gumna
 Kɔrɔmba (formerly Basa-Gurmana)
 Basa-Gurara
 Basa-Kwali
 Basa-Benue (formerly Bassa-Kwomu)
 Basa-Makurdi

Figure 2 shows the likely subgrouping of the Basa languages;

Figure 2. The Basa languages



The Basa-Kontagora reported by Rowlands (1962) still exist; but only just. Along the Koton Koro road, N.E. of Kontagora, are a number of villages of 'Basawa', in particular Udara and Mangu. There were about 5 speakers of 'Tubasa' in these villages in 1986, all very old. Even at that time, they no longer remembered the language perfectly -however, they recalled enough of the lexicon to establish that this *is* the same lect recorded by Rowlands. All the other Basawa speak only Hausa.

The Basa-Gumna are discussed and sited geographically in ethnographic texts such as Gunn & Conant (1960). The town of Gumna is about 10 km west of the Tegina-Zungeru road. However, it is now deserted as the population was moved to the road in approximately 1963, where they now live in a town called Yakila. There are two satellite hamlets, both apparently known as 'Basa', in the bush westwards of the road. In Yakila in 1986, there were only two people who spoke Basa, and that not well, so it is effectively dead.

The town of Basa-Gurmana is some 20 km south of Allawa, near Pandogari, and not far from the Kaduna river. The Basa community here has retained its own language. However, they do not use the word Basa of themselves but instead;

bɔKɔrɔmba	one person
aKɔrɔmba	the people
tuKɔrɔmba	the language

Other Basa said this may be a clan name that has been expanded into an ethnonym. Notice also the similarity to the elusive Koro who appear so often in the Middle Belt.

The Basa-Gurara, and their neighbours the Basa Kwali, live along the Gurara river on the western boundary of the Federal Capital territory. A rather inaccurate wordlist of Basa-Kwali is available in Sterk (1977).

The Basa Kwomu⁴ are the most well-known of the Basa peoples and have been described briefly in a number of ethnographic sources (e.g. Gunn & Conant, 1960). They live on both sides of the Benue -their centre appears to be Oguma on the south side and Umaisha on the north side. The appellation 'Kwomu', often used to distinguish them from the Nupoid Basa-Nge, is an administrative contraction of 'Oku Omu', a greeting to a senior woman. The term has now fallen out of favour locally, and should not be used without a cautionary note to indicate that it is now considered pejorative. It has been the subject of heated polemics in locally distributed mimeos (Tukura, 1984a). The Basa-Benue who live on the south bank of the Benue were brought within the missionary orbit relatively early and there has been a literacy programme in operation since at least the 1950's. Orthographic issues still raise a certain amount of heat locally (Tukura, 1984b). A translation of the New Testament has been in circulation for some time, and the Old Testament is in the process of being completed. Imoh (2002) has described the phonology and morphology of Basa.

Autonyms;

bu-Basa	one person
a-Basa	the people
ru-Basa	the language

The correct reference term is therefore simply 'Bas(s)a'. However, in view of the multiplicity of Basa groups, 'Basa-Benue' would be a convenient term for scholars to use -though local opinion favours simply 'Bassa'.

The Basa of Makurdi live in twelve villages on the north bank of the Benue west of Makurdi. They are marked on the map accompanying Gunn & Conant (1960) and Hansford et al. (1976). Speakers of Basa-Benue have told me that they can communicate with them with some difficulty.

3.2 The Kamuku group

The Kamuku, following Gunn & Conant (1960) and Rowlands (1962) have conventionally been divided into 'Acipa' and 'Ucinda'. However, Kamuku do not seem to recognize this as principal division, and the scatter of Kamuku dialects seem to relate to the individual hills in the Mariga area which were the homeland of particular subgroups. Wordlists of Ucinda, Uregi and Kuki have been compiled, but without data on the other subgroups Kamuku cannot be effectively subdivided. The tree treats Kamuku as a single group. Table 3 below shows the names of the other subgroups, based on informants' assertions.

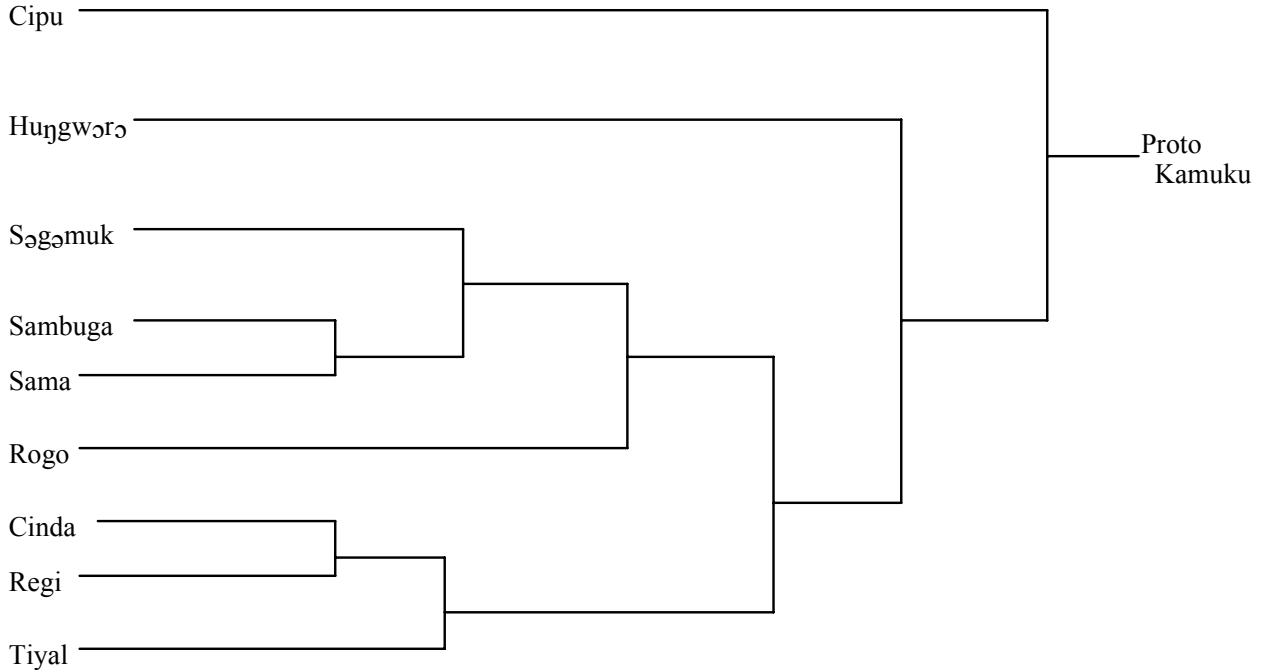
Common form	One person	People	Language
Ucinda	Bucinda	uCinda	tuCinda
	Buregi	Uregi	Turegi
Acipa	Bucepo	Ucepo	Tacep
	Borogo	u-rɔgo	Turɔgo
	is said to be the same as:		
	Bucanja	Ucanja	Tucanja
	Mutabɔroma	Utabɔroma	Tabɔroma
	Bushama	Ushama	Tushama
Ngwoi	buHuɲwərə	Uhuɲwərə	Tuhuɲwərə
	buSundura	uSundura	Tusundura

Tucinda and Turegi are closely related at the dialect cluster level -wordlists confirm this. Ticep and Tabɔroma are said to be loosely related. Tushama is said to be isolated, as is Tuhungwərə. The others probably all form part of the Tucinda continuum, although this remains to be confirmed.

⁴I would like to take this opportunity to thank the late Robert and Joyce Hyslop in Dekina for their encouragement and hospitality while working on Basa-Benue.

Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1995) point out that the language known as ‘Western Acipa’ (the Kamuku spoken in Kakihum and Kumbashi, correctly known as Cɛpu) is very different from all other varieties of Kamuku. As a result the propose (op. cit. p. 11) to assign Cɛpu to its own distinct branch of West Kainji. This is probably to overstate the case; Cɛpu shares a number of common lexemes (and associated prefixes) with the rest of the Kamuku cluster, although it does have many lexical innovation that appear to be unique. In view of this, the most likely explanation is that it has been heavily affected by a substrate language in the region, although the genetic affiliation of such a language is unresolved. McGill (p.c.) has proposed re-assigning it to the Kambari cluster (§3.3). If the conventional view is correct, Cɛpu is the remotest member of the Kamuku cluster (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The Kamuku languages



3.3 The Pongu (Ri) languages

The Pongu group consists of four languages, usually known as Pongu, Ura, Baushi and Gurmana⁵. Baushi can be considered as language cluster with four members. The tentative name proposed here is based on the fact that the Pongu are much more diverse and numerous than the other members of the cluster; however, this should not be taken to imply that Ura, Baushi and Gurmana are in some way incorporated ethnically into Pongu. Pongu is not correct ethnonym, but it can be usefully retained as a group name. The table below shows the correspondences of common names, languages and person names in Pongu, Ura and Baushi. No ethnonym for the Gurmana people has yet been recorded.

Usual Name	One person	People	Language
Pongu	Bwə-rī	A-rī	Tə-rə
	Buwəgə	Awəgə	Tu-wəgə

The following subsections discuss the names, locations and status of individual languages.

⁵ For reasons that are unclear (perhaps typographical error?), Gerhardt (1989) placed Fungwa and Rin with Kamuku in opposition to Baushi and Gurmana. The present group was proposed and provided with some justification in Blench (1988) and has been confirmed by more detailed work (Dettweiler and Dettweiler 1995; see especially their footnote 11).

Pongu (Rĩ)

The Pongu have been surveyed by Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1992) and corrections and amendments to this section are based on his unpublished report. The Pongu are the most numerous of people in the region and their farming settlements have spread into remote areas far beyond their home region (Map 6). The Rin live in isolated villages, mostly in remote bush locations. They practice a complex system of sister-exchange that makes it difficult for outsiders to enter their community. As a result their culture and language have remained exceptionally strong. It is difficult to estimate their numbers exactly, but there are probably at least 20,000. Their central town is Pangu Gari (divided into 'old' -Tsoho' and 'new' -Sabo) is some 20 kilometres S.E.E. of Tegna. Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1992) discuss alternative pronunciations recorded for the ethnonym of the Pongu. Aya, Ayi, Ariya and Ariyu have all been recorded and Dettweiler suggests the possibility of using Arya for the people and Tarya for the language. However, this is to omit the nasalization and to create a multiplicity of reference forms -hence the proposal to use Rin for both people and language. All such terms may be regarded as interim, since it is likely that the Pongu themselves will want to formally adopt a reference name that more closely reflects their own terms.

The Rĩ are divided into eight clans as follows;

Ca-su	Ca-gere = Ca-majere	A-zhiga
Ca-undu	A-baba = U-bwɔbwɔ	A-waga
A-sebi	A-wusi = A-kwa	

Some clans appear to have duplicate names, shown by the = sign in the second column.

All the clans are said to speak 'the same' and their language comes under the rubric of Rin, except for the Awaga [Awəgə] whose pronunciation is notably different. However, informants' statements and the comparative wordlist of Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1992) does suggest there are minor variations and that these are based on clans. This is clearly not a barrier to effective intercomprehension.

MacDonell, James and Philip Smith (2004) have circulated a phonology and grammar of Pongu as well as a short wordlist⁶.

Ura

The Ura live in five villages (Gulbe, Gabi Tukurbe, Urenciki, Renga and Utana) along the new Pandogari-Allawa road. It is unlikely that they number more than 1,000 people. Their correct name is;

mu-Fungwa	one person
a-Fungwa	the people
tu-Fungwa	the language

This suggests an hypothesis about the names 'Pongu' and 'Ura'; these are Hausa mispronunciations for the Fungwa and Rin, but transposed.

Gurmana

The Gurmana people live in the village of Gurmana and some associated hamlets. They are unlikely to number more than 2-3,000. Despite several attempts, I was unable to clearly determine their autonym. Remarkably, Johnston (1919) includes a long word-list of Gurmana in his study of Bantu and 'Semi-Bantu' languages.

⁶ Thanks to Stuart McGill for drawing my attention to this.

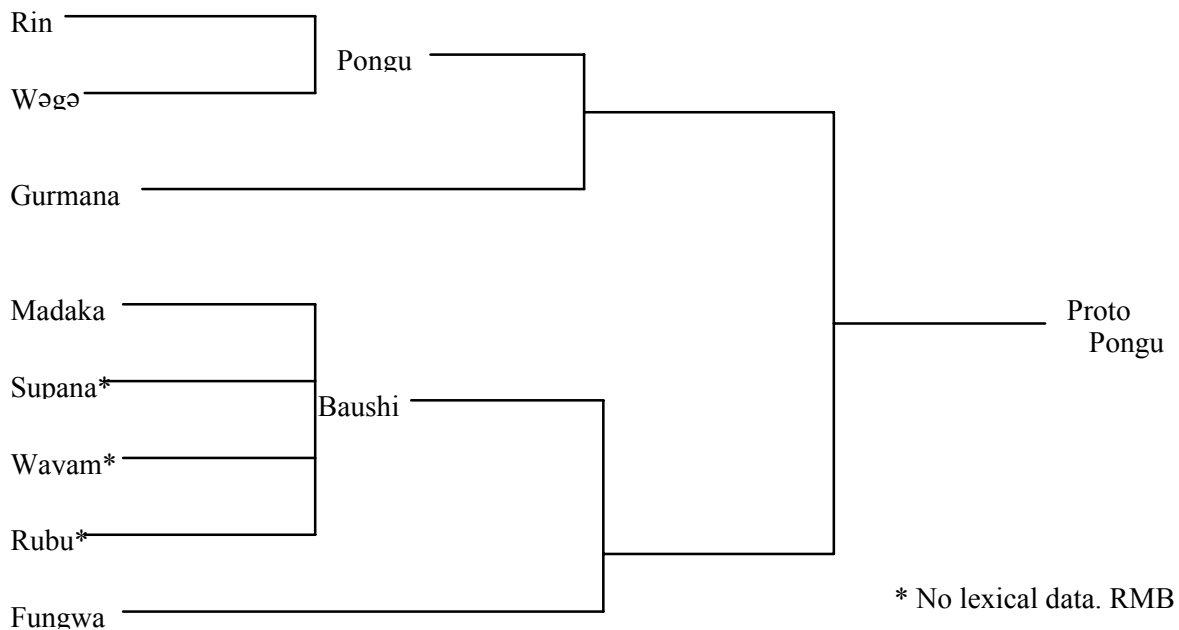
Baushi

The Baushi live in several villages northeast of Zungeru, the most prominent of which is Madaka. There are probably four lects that form a cluster to make up Baushi -Madaka, Supana, Wayam and Rubu. Rubu [Robo, Rubawa] are mentioned in one early source (Temple, 1922:341,518,523) but the existence of other Baushi lects is only known from survey data by Regnier (p.c.). The whole Baushi cluster probably numbers at least 10,000. Madaka are divided into three clans the Undo, the Sambora and the Jibwa.

Subclassification of the Pongu group

Figure 4 proposes an internal classification of the Pongu group, based on a rapid inspection of the existing lexical data. The status of the Baushi subgroups remains uncertain and data for the others is scanty at best.

Figure 4. The Pongu languages

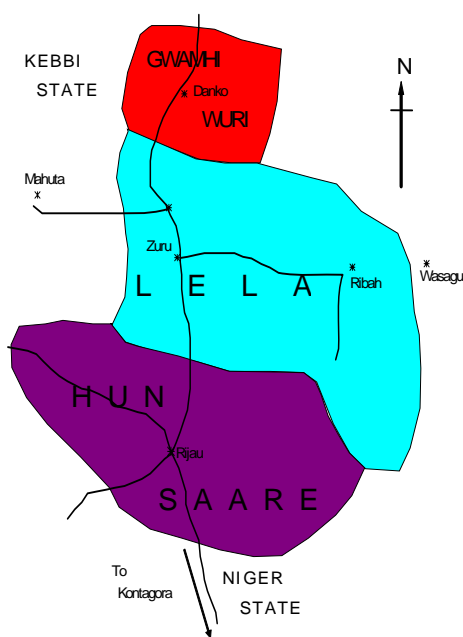


The four major groups undoubtedly represent distinct languages and there a significant lexical differences between them.

3.5 The Lela group

Lela (as Dakarkari) is often used as a cover-term for the peoples of the region, including Duka and the Kag cluster, and reference books such as Gunn and Conant (1960) and Wente-Lukas (1985). This is now generally rejected, and the term Lela should be applied only to the group formerly called Dakarkari and based around Zuru.

Map 2. The Lela, Hun-Saare and Gwamhi-Wuri Languages



3.5.1 Lela (Dakarkari)

The Lela people are usually referred to in the literature as Dakarkari and their language as Dakarci. The etymology of this name is uncertain and it has been derived either from Arabic *dakakir* 'idolators' or from the Hausa *dàakàarèe*, 'infantry-man'. This name has now been generally rejected by the community and Lela is preferred, based on the autonym minus affixes. The correct names of the people and language are;

k'-Lélà	one person
Lélnà	the people
c'-Lélà	the language

A valuable dictionary of cLela (Rikoto et al. 2001) provides a large database of reliably transcribed material.

3.5.2 Hun-Saare (Duka)

The Hun people live directly south of the Lela, between Niger and Kebbi States. The Hun are conventionally divided into two groups, the Hun and the Saare, but are commonly known in Hausa as Duka and their language as Dukanci (Dettweiler & Dettweiler 1993). They are first mentioned by Temple (1922:96-100). A summary ethnographic description is given in Gunn and Conant (1960) and a more complete anthropological account in Ces (1974). A Bible translation project that began in the 1970s resulted in a book describing the noun-phrase (Bendor-Samuel *et al.* 1973), and a summary description (Cressman & Skitch 1980). Some trial vernacular publications were also issued, such as a book of Duka proverbs (anon, n.d.). Bible translation was restarted in the 1990s and a New Testament has now been published (Heath p.c.). A substantial electronic dictionary of tHun (Dukawa) is available, associated with the translation project.

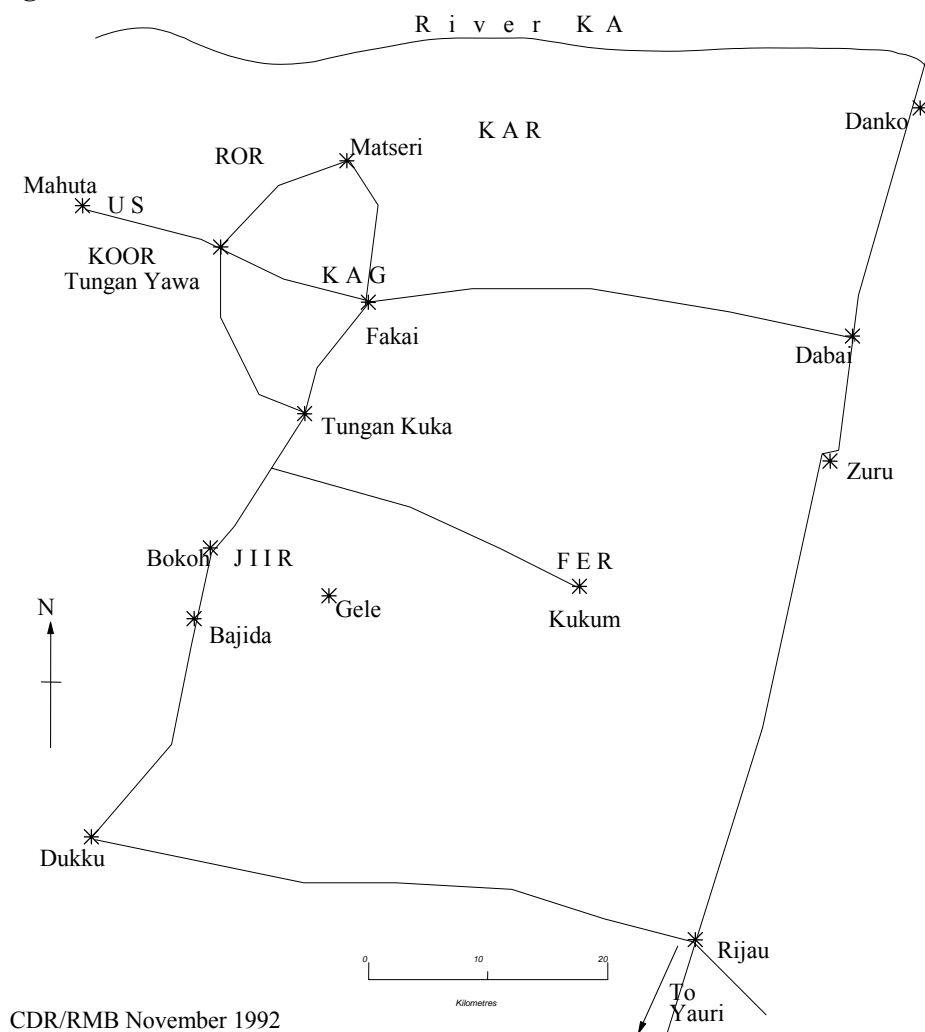
3.5.3 Kag (Fakai) cluster

The first mention of the languages of the Kag cluster is probably in Temple (1922:89) who refers to 'Kelinchi' [? = Kelanci, i.e. Ker-ni] as the language of the Adoma. They are mentioned by Rowlands (1962) who gives short lists of nouns in 'Fakawa', Kelawa and Zusu. Table 4 shows the peoples and languages of the Kag cluster and Map 3 shows their locations;

Table 4. Peoples and Languages of the Kag Cluster

Hausa Name	c-Lela Name	One person	People	Language
Fakkawa	Pək-nu		Kag-ne	t-Kag
	Pək-nu		əs-U _s	t-U _s
Gelawa	Geeri-ni		a-Jiir	t-Jiir
Zuksun	Wipsi-ni		a-Zuksun	t-Zuksun
Kukumawa	Wipsi-ni		əs-Fer	t-Fer
Kelawa	Keri-ni		Kər-ni	t-Kər
Tuduwa	?		a-Ror	t-ma-Ror
Kuluwa	?		a-Koor	t-ma-koor

Map 3. The Kag cluster



3.5.4 Gwamhi-Wuri

The Gwamhi-Wuri are almost certainly the people who appear in Rowlands (1962) as the Bangawa or Lyase-ne (the cLela form) as their centre is given as Donko. Rowlands give a short list of nouns in their language. Some confusion has arisen because Bangawa is also applied to another group of people in this region, the people of Ukata (see section 3.3) who speak a dialect of Kambari. The people who speak this language are divided into two groups, the Gwamhi and the Wuri (Gwamfawa and Wurawa in local Hausa). The following table shows the people and language names.

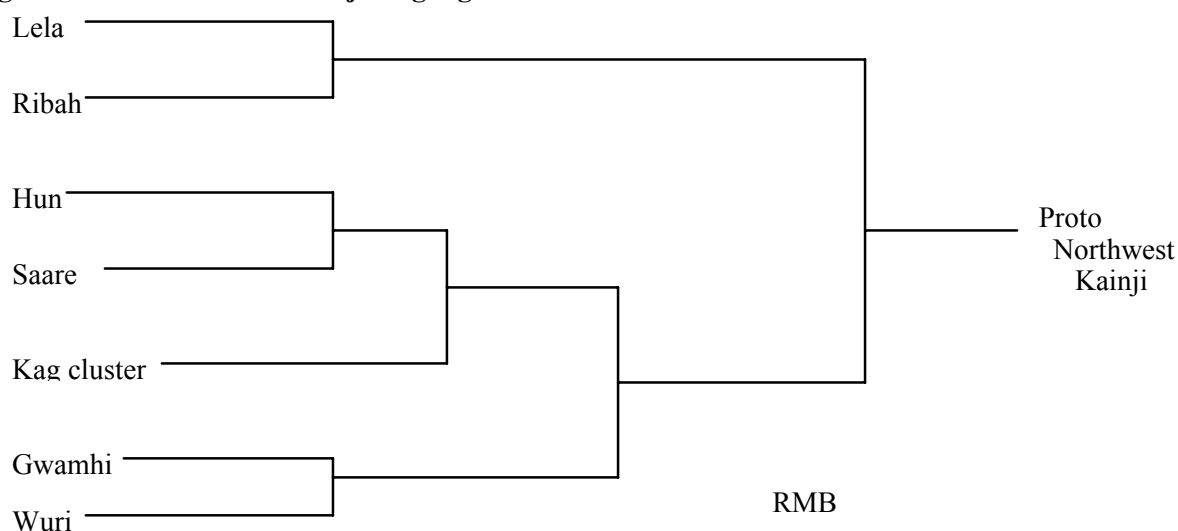
one person	wa-Gwamhr	wa-Wuri
the people	a-Gwamhr	a-Wuri
the language	Gwamhr	Wuri

Although the distinction between the two sub-groups is recognised linguistically in this terminology, speakers insist that this does not correspond to a dialect difference and that all speakers speak the exactly the same.

3.5.5 Subclassification of the Northwest group

The Northwest group is easily defined phonologically by a single innovation; the development of consonantal prefixes with only a transitional central vowel. These are quite distinctive, not only within West Kainji, but within Benue-Congo as a whole. A surprising feature of the group is that Lela is the most remote member. Many lexical items shared by the other three languages are different in Lela. Since Lela falls between Kag and Gwamhi-Wuri geographically, it must have expanded subsequently, separating the two groups. Figure 5 gives a tentative internal classification of the Lela group; evidence for the classification is given in the appendix.

Figure 5. The Northwest Kainji languages

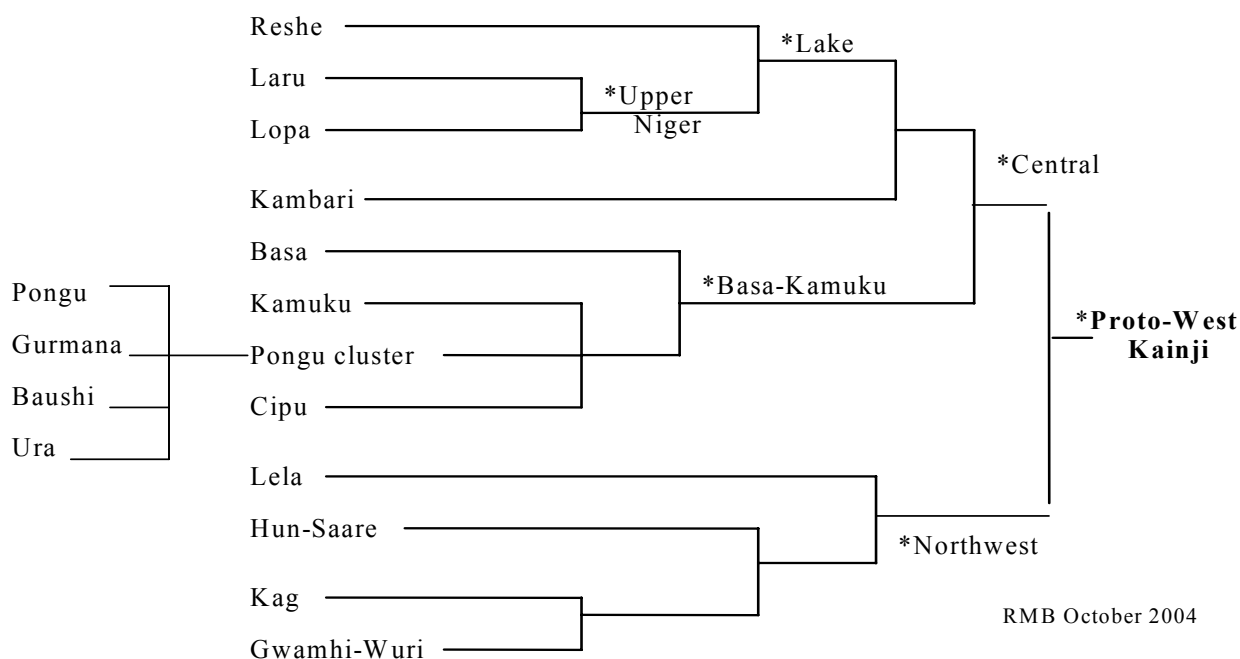


4. Proposed subclassification of West Kainji Languages

The unpublished data makes it possible to speculate on the internal relations of the West Kainji languages. The phonological and morphological evidence clearly defines some subgroups but it is not yet adequate to propose innovations validating the higher nodes. Part II of this study, comparing the noun-classes of West Kainji languages will look for group-level correspondences. For the present paper, the basis of the argument is lexical innovations. These are set out in the appendix.

Figure 6 shows a tentative subclassification of the West Kainji languages. I have proposed some names for the classificatory levels represented by different nodes. If further work confirms the tree outlined here then they can either be adopted by something more culturally appropriate.

Figure 6. Subclassification of West Kainji Languages



5. Conclusion

Compared with other branches of Benue-Congo, West Kainji has until recently been the subject of very little research, as is evident from the fact that this paper represents the first report of a number of languages. Some dialects of Kambari have been studied in detail but almost all other lects are represented by scattered articles and an abundance of manuscript data of varying reliability. The recent inception of a number of new projects in various languages suggests that in the next decade will the situation will improve markedly.

The priorities for research are clearly longer and more detailed descriptions of the languages in question, and preliminary data on Rubu as well as some members of the Kag cluster.

Appendix 1. Evidence for the subgrouping of West Kainji

Introduction

To support the proposed internal classification of West Kainji, the main evidence offered here is lexical. Although there are clearly defined phonological innovations within subgroups, (such as the long consonants in Kambari) none apply to the group as a whole. Moreover, the absence of data on most East Kainji languages makes it difficult to prove that these groups are genuinely distinct. Rowlands (1962) remains the only article to consider the link between the two moieties and he is concerned to show how East and West Kainji [Chawai-Kurama-Gure and Niger Province languages] are distinct from Plateau.

The following cognate tables then are intended to justify the 'tree' presented in Figure 6. They present lexical items that seem to distinguish particular languages or language clusters, identified with nodes on the genetic classification. Each section is also preceded with notes on phonological innovations. To produce a single lexical or phonological innovation distinguishing West Kainji languages appears to be difficult, although this may be partly explained by the patchiness of available data. The best isogloss distinguishing the whole group is the word for ten, which presumably originally had a shape something like *kuNpa, but which has lost the initial velar in all languages except Kambari and Shama/Səgəmuk. This is apparently related to the *kob forms found in some branches of Plateau and probably ultimately related to the PB *-kumi.

#-kuNpa ten	
Language	Attestation
Reshe	upo
Laru	úbà
Lopa	oba
Kamberi	kuppá
Kakihum	u-kupa
Kamuku (Ucind)	opa
Regi	opa
Kuki	opa
Shama	ɾɛkɔpɛ
Səgəmək	ɾɛkɔpɛ
Bobi	ɛ-kwapi
Basa (Benue)	umpwa
Gurmana	uŋkwa
Fungwa	ŋopA
Rĩ	ufwA
Lela	'opa
Hun-Saare	up
Kag	op ^h
Gwamhi-Wuri	oho

Lake

Upper Niger + Reshe

Table 5. Isoglosses for the Lake group

Language	two	egg
Quasi-reconstruction	#ri-si	#-re
Laru	ì-jí	iri
Lopa	ri-si	are
Reshe	ri-si-	r-ere

Reshe

Reshe has so many unusual lexical items and its system of noun-class prefixes is so distinct from the other members of the group that it was originally classified as an isolated language.

Upper Niger

Isoglosses linking Lopa and Laru and isolating them from the rest of West Kainji.

Table 6. Isoglosses for the Upper Niger group

Language	crocodile	hand	wind	elephant	tail	to die
Quasi-reconstruction	#-ra	#taha	#nyã	#cã	#ina	#u
Laru	ra	taa	nyà	cã	ínà	ú ^w
Lopa	ura	taha	nyã	ca	ri-ina	u

Kambari

See evidence in Rowlands (1962:80)

Basa-Kamuku

#-sunda meat, animal

Language	Attestation
Kamuku (Regi)	ə-zumbə
Basa	u-sunda
Gurmana	a-sə
Fungwa	sunduwa
Ri	sundə

(+ *-su. 'animal')

#-gyasa war

Language	Attestation
Ngwoi	ə-gas
Kamuku (Regi)	gesə
Basa (Gurmana)	o-gəsə
Fungwa	gyasa
Ri	gyəsə

However, Laru has **áásù** which may be the same root with an eroded initial consonant.

Lela Group

#-kom	hand
Language	Attestation
Lela	a-koma
tHun	u-kom
Pəku	u-kom

Basa-Kamuku + Lela Group

#d-ela arrow

Language	Attestation
Ngwoi	e-ʔel
Kamuku Regi	-era
Basa Gurmana	i-ʔile
Fungwa	iʔila
Ri	ri-ira
Lela	d-ela
tHun	r-ʔær
Pəku	e-rer

#-gya egg

Language	Attestation
Ngwoi	e-egi
Kamuku	e-ɛŋge
Basa Gurmana	re-ɛŋge
Gurmana	re-ɛŋgi
Fungwa	mi-ɛŋgya
Ri	A-ɛŋge
Lela	d-gyaŋ
tHun	r-gyə
Kag	ər-ge

Evidence for the internal structure of Basa-Kamuku

Basa + Rĩ cluster

#-yala hand	Language	Gloss	Attestation
	Basa		u-yala
	Baushi		o-'all
	Fungwa		ala
	Rĩ		a-ra

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