

Bangi me, a language of unknown affiliation

in Northern Mali

[DRAFT FOR COMMENT -NOT FOR CITATION WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE AUTHOR]

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This printout: Cambridge, November 20, 2007

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1. Introduction

This is an annotated wordlist of the Bangi me language, spoken in northern Mali. The wordlist was collected with the assistance of Kabo Bamani from a group of villagers in Niana on the 2nd and 9th of March 2005¹. The informants were;

Informants:

Yamba Babaji
Kunja Kasambara
Baba Tarawali
Ali Babbaji
Kola Basogo
Samba Babbaji

all over sixty years. I would like to thank them for their patience as the elicitation sessions were long and sometimes passed through several languages. Their picture appears below.

This language was subsequently worked upon by the late Stefan Elders, a long-term colleague and friend, who regrettably died in Mali following complications from a stomach ailment on 19th February 2007. His notebooks may well contain much more detailed information, but it is unclear whether it can be used without further work. This publication can therefore serve as an interim measure as well as a memorial to Stefan.



2. Information about the language

2.1 Nomenclature

This language has quite a number of alternative names, given the small quantity of published research. These are shown in Table 1;

Reference	Language name	Comment
Bertho (1953)	Dyeni or Yēni	Village name
Calame-Griaule (1956)	Bāŋgeri mē	Endonym
DNAFLA/DRLP (1981)	Numadaw	Unknown
Togo (1984)	Noumandan	Unknown
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Numa-daw	Unknown
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Elebo	Outsiders' name
Plungian & Tembine (1994)	Bangeri-me	Endonym
Hochstetler et al. (2004)	Baŋgeri-me	Endonym

¹ The mission was conducted under the auspices of the Mission archéologique et ethnoarchéologique suisse en Afrique de l'Ouest (MAESAO), Genève. I would like to thank the director, Eric Huysecom for support in this work, also my colleague, Denis Douyon of the Université de Bamako, who was part of the broader research on Dogon languages, but was not involved in this particular study. Thanks also to Lee Hochstetler for general advice and arranging access to the original electronic files of the SIL survey.

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The terms ‘Numadaw’ and similar were completely unknown to speakers. This survey found the language name to be Ban̄gi-me and the name of the people to be Ban̄ga-na. The intrusive –ri- is found in many records of endonyms in this area (e.g. Duleri for the neighbouring Dulo Dogon and probably derives from Fulfulde).

2.2 Location and settlements

Ban̄gi-me is spoken in seven villages east of Karge and reached by turning off the Sevare-Douentza road 38 km. north of Sevare. Table 2 shows the names of these villages recorded by the present survey with grid references as well as the 1987 population, where this was given.

Table 2. Ban̄ga-na villages with locations

Official	IPA	pop. 1987	N	W
Bara	Bara	211	14:48:20	3:45:30
Bounou	Bunu	418	14:47:50	3:45:40
Niana	Nyana	241	14:48:10	3:46:50
Die'ni	Jene		14:47:10	3:45:50
Digari	Digaro		14:47:40	3:46:50
Doro	Doro		14:49:20	3:47:20
Due	?Jeni		14:48:20	3:47:00

Source: survey and Hochstetler et al. (2004)

Visual observation does not suggest major increases in size since the 1987 census, but the uncensused villages are at least equal in size to those recorded. The population of Ban̄gi-me speakers is likely to be 2-3000.

2.3 Language status

The Ban̄gi me language is presently being transmitted to the children. However, there appears to be a loss of complex vocabulary. For example, the numbers above ten have been replaced in ordinary speech and some lexical items were only recalled by elder speakers. The second language of Ban̄gi me speakers is Niononkhe, the Mande language spoken in Karge. Niononkhe is a dialect of Bozo or Sorko and is referred to as Sogo. Fulfulde, a dominant language in the zone, is known to some individuals and there is a limited amount of French spoken, usually by migrant workers or students. These languages are the source of a small number of loanwords. There are no schools in the Ban̄ga na villages but some children go to the state school in Karge.

2.4 Ban̄ga-na culture and history

The Ban̄ga-na are farming people and their distinctive names for crops suggest that they were farmers prior to the expansion of Dogon in their area. Their economy has been transformed in recent years by a move from their mountain villages to the plains and the growth of market gardening. The photograph illustrates the extremely rocky terrain in the Ban̄ga-na area;



The Ban̄ga-na are now all Muslims, and this represents a great cultural loss. Possibly aspects of their pre-Muslim culture are recoverable with more in-depth fieldwork.

2.5 The classification of Ban̄gi me

All the authors that have written about Ban̄gi me have noted how different it is from other Dogon varieties. The only published data on this language is the short wordlist of ‘Yeni’ in Bertho (1953:433) which appears to be accurate and the hundred words collected by the Durieux in 1998, cited in Hochstetler et al. (2004). These latter forms incorporate significant elements from the bound morphology and should thus be used with care.

Bertho (1953:413) considered that the affinities of the Dogon languages as a whole were with the ‘Voltaic’ languages (i.e. Gur) but placed Yeni in its own group. He says;

Le dialecte Dyéni ou Yéni des Dogon du canton de Lèol-Géou est le plus aberrant; néanmoins, il se distingue nettement du Bozo-Mandé et du Peul. Il possède d’ailleurs autant de radicaux Voltaïques que les autres dialectes Dogon; mais ces radicaux ne sont pas les mêmes radicaux Voltaïques que ceux conservés par les autres dialectes Dogon, comme si le dialecte Dyéni s’était séparé de l’ancêtre Voltaïque soit à une autre époque que les autres dialectes, soit en un autre point du groupe Voltaïque, lequel, comme on le sait, s’étend de Sikasso au Soudan jusqu’à la frontière de Nigéria.

Unfortunately, Bertho presents no data to justify his argument and no particular relationship with Gur is apparent in the present data. Calame-Griaule (1956:66) says;

C’est un dialecte unique en son genre parlé dans le canton de Léolguéou-Nonnonké qui représente moins de 1.000 habitants; il est tout à fait aberrant et ne ressemble à aucun autre, bien qu’il se rattache à la langue dogon par sa structure. Les autres villages de la région parlent le bozo.

and again in Calame-Griaule (1968:viii):

D’un autre point de vue, l’étude du petit dialecte appelé /bāŋeri mé/, parlé par une petite fraction de Dogon à l’extrême Nord-Ouest du pays, et qui, bien que reconnu comme «dogon» par les autres, semble présenter des caractères totalement aberrants, serait fort utile pour établir des critères d’appartenance linguistique.

The lexicostatistical table in Hochstetler et al. (2004) records percentages below 10 with other Dogon lects and this would usually be taken to exclude a language from an established grouping. This survey, based on much more extensive material, finds no reason to alter this view, and as a consequence, Ban̄gi-me is treated as a language isolate. Indeed, given that it is surrounded by Dogon speakers and has a grammatical structure similar to Dogon, it is remarkable that the percentage of Dogon words is not higher by the usual process of language interaction.

The wordlist given below notes external, Dogon and other cognates where these can be identified. Some of these are tenuous at best. Ban̄gi me *does* have some Niger-Congo roots not attested in Dogon, but not enough to establish its membership of the phylum.

3. Phonology

The phonology of Ban̄gi me is based on rapid observations and should therefore be regarded as tentative at this stage.

3.1 Vowels

Ban̄gi me probably has seven phonemic vowels;

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-Mid	e		o
Open-Mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	

Ban̄gi me permits all vowels to be long or short and all short vowels can be nasalised. Examples of nasalised long vowels are rare, principally the central vowel, e.g.;

cheek **akāāwa**
twenty **tāāwa**

But also;

tree sp. **kɔ̄ɔ̄ mye**

Ban̄gi me and other Dogon languages permit sequences of two tone-bearing vowels which contrast with sequences of vowel plus semi-vowel.

bù	father
dù	river
dianki	add to
giera	rub
kìará	answer
shiã	strong
shio	sew
sìé	wipe (nose)

These are assumed to derive from intervocalic consonant deletion. In one case this can be demonstrated, as the following forms co-exist synchronically;

fat **banu ~ bãũ**

It is likely that $i + V \rightarrow yV$ and $V + u \rightarrow Vw$, whereupon the tone is levelled. Some Dogon languages permit more rising and falling tones than Ban̄gi me, suggesting this levelling process takes place at different speeds.

3.2 Consonants

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Ban̄gi me consonants are as follows:

	Bilabial	Alve- olar	Alveopal atal	Palatal	Velar	Labial- velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b	t d		c j	k g		
Nasal	m	n		ɲ	ŋ		
Trill		r					
Fricative	ɸ	s z	ʃ		[χ]		h
Approximant		v		y		w	
Lateral Approximant		l					

There appears to be certain amount of allophonic or free variation between voiced and voiceless alveolars and velars especially in medials. Thus a single elicitation session two speakers may produce the same word with k~g, t~d. An unusual phoneme is the bilabial fricative /ɸ/;

breast (female) **ɸye**
chicken **ɸye**

These are in contrast with;

guinea-fowl **pye**

supporting the phonemic status of this sound. This phoneme does not occur in neighbouring languages as far as is known.

A voiced velar fricative occurs in some words, such as;

chop down **dɔŋɔ**

No examples of contrast with /g/ have yet been recorded.

Implosive /d/ was recorded in the phonetic data, as with several Dogon languages in this area, but there is insufficient evidence to set it up as a phoneme, and it may be within the normal range of variation. For example;

village **d̄iyà**

Labialisation and palatalisation

Ban̄gi me permits contrastive palatalisation and labialisation of some consonants;

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Cy

ɸye	breast (female)
gadyẽ	world
gyemɔ	fence
jyenshe	chief
kyĩ	canoe
myû	I, me
mbye	arrow
nye	mushroom
nnye	yesterday
pye	guinea-fowl
sye	hawk
tyere	load
uye	water
wuyuwye	fonio

Cw

bwe	leg
dwa	tree
gwɔ̄	man
jwě	dream
kwere	fighting
mwɔ	sore/wound
twoy	narrow
ywe	moon

Ban̄gi me also allows labialisation with the bilabial approximant for alveolars, which may form contrastive sets with the labial-velar approximant;

tʷe	ashes
dʷe	clay

Very common in Ban̄gi me and unrecorded in other Dogon lects is a labial-palatal prosody. This occurs with many consonants;

cwyã	head-pad
dwyembũ	yellow
gbwye	mosquito
gwyɛ	land/country
kwye	bark
nwye	oil
pwye	wife
twye	termite

Long consonants

Ban̄gi me, like the Dogon languages, permits some long consonants. Typically these are nasals;

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m	mm̄ont̄ori	patas monkey
	d̄omme	mud
n	nnafe	west
	nnesaw	why?

Word-medially, these may arise from morpheme boundaries, but there is no evidence for vowel deletion to explain their presence in the initial slot. Although some Dogon language permit tone-bearing nasals in initial position, there is no evidence for this in Ban̄gi me.

One case of /yy/ has been recorded, and this also occurs in other Dogon languages.

yya who?

/ll/ was recorded in some loanwords from Fulfulde.

Nasals and nasalisation

Ban̄gi me has homorganic nasals both medially and word-initially. Thus;

mp/mb

mpa	friend
kampaw	pincers
mbye	arrow
t̄ombe	cooling bowl

nd/nk

ndara	to plaster
yindo	two
nkwa ati	rain
nwanke	leopard

Ban̄gi me permits doubled nasals at morpheme junctures. Thus;

minna	door
d̄omme	mud
nne	four

More unusually, it also permits long nasals initially. The nasals are not tone-bearing.

bush	nna
patas monkey	mm̄ont̄ori

3.3 Tones

Ban̄gi me has two tones, High and Low, and very restricted glide tones. An example of the two-way contrast is as follows;

dégé sickness
dègè head

Rising tones occur on pronouns. For example;

myǔ I
ǎw you pl.

The tone is contrastive with;

àw you sg.

4. Morphology

4.1 Morpheme structure

The great majority of Baŋgi me words end in an open syllable. In the syllable-final slot, the semi-vowels /y/ and /w/ are permitted, as well as /ŋ/. The first syllable of

pernde tear

appears to permit /r/ but this may be an assimilation phenomenon.

4.2 Nouns

Plurals of nouns in Baŋgi me are typically formed by the suffixed marker **pɛɛɛ**. Thus;

nɔɔɛ bone **nɔɔɛ pɛɛɛ** bones

However, these suffixes typically apply to animates and separable objects. Thus ‘head’ and other body parts have no plurals. Baŋgi me has a few irregular plurals;

Gloss	sg.	pl.
ear	taŋa	taŋa-nɛ
person	yiwɛɛ	yamba

4.2 Pronouns

The paradigm of pronouns in isolation is as follows;

mi I
àw you sg.
ka he/she
nɛ we
ǎw you pl.
ni they

Pronouns incorporate negative clitics (see §5.3).

5. Syntax

5.1 General

Eliciting sample sentences reliably in Ban̄gi me is difficult because of a lack of French speakers familiar with sentence paradigms. Speakers constantly tend to re-translate referential sentences to their own point of view, restructuring pronouns and thus verbal forms. Examples in this section must be treated with the greatest of caution.

5.2 Qualification

Ban̄gi me numerals follow the noun qualified. Thus;

kure tiri dog one

The noun does not agree in number when high numerals are applied;

kure yinu dog two
kure tar dog three

Lower numerals have slightly different adjectival forms from the count forms.

Ordinals are expressed by the word **ntigoro** following the expression;

kure doro ntigoro first dog
kure yindu ntigoro second dog

‘One’ has a different form in this expression, but all other numerals are as in the count form.

Adjectives follow the noun and are invariant;

kure pore dog black

5.3 Constituent order

Like Dogon, the basic word order of Ban̄gi me is SOV. Thus;

myũ **bòrèfì** **ndyá**
I food eat

Unlike Dogon, there appears to be no inflection on the verb in agreement with the pronoun. Thus;

I	myũ	bòrèfì	ndyá
you	àw	bòrèfì	ndyá
he/she	kaw	bòrèfì	ndyá
we	nne	bòrèfì	nendyá
you	áw	bòrèfì	nendyá
they	nde	bòrèfì	nendyá

ne- is inserted before the verb to mark plural persons.

Negation is achieved via a morpheme **-be** bound to the pronoun. So;

m̄bé **bòrèfī** **ndyá**
I not food eats
I'm not eating food

The paradigm of negative pronouns is as follows;

I **m̄bé**
you **àbé**
he/she **kàbé**
we **nnèbé**
you **ǎbé**
they **nyìbé**

Ban̄gi me operates an aspectual system like Dogon, with a completed/incomplete distinction. The complete verb paradigm is as follows;

Boureima **dara** **myǔ**
B. hit me

Object pronouns are the same as subject pronouns in the singular. With plural persons the verb is preceded by a nasal. Thus;

Boureima **ndara** **nle**
B. hit us

and the nasal of the first person plural pronoun becomes a lateral.

Uncompleted verbs are marked by a repetition of part of the verb prior to the object pronoun. Thus;

Boureima **da** **mi** **ndara**
B. hits me hit

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6. Baŋgi me wordlist

Abbreviations for loanwords;

- B. Bambara**
- F. Fulfulde
- Fr. French
- S. Sɔgɔ = Niononkhe
- T. Tamachek

PWS is Proto-Western Sudanic, the quasi-reconstructions of Westermann (1927), marked with # and here standing as a proxy for Niger-Congo.

Wordlists of Dogon lects referred in the commentary can be downloaded at;

<http://www.rogerblench.info/Language%20data/Niger-Congo/Dogon/Dogon%20page.htm>

where background on each language is also given.

The list includes French as this was the primary language of elicitation.

English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
tree	arbre	dwa	
leaf	feuille	pūyε	
root	racine	yi	
branch	branche	kεmε	
bark	écorce	kwyε	
thorn	épine	tuŋ	
grass	herbe	guje	
mushroom	champignon	nye	
seed/stone/pip	semence/graine	de	
charcoal	charbon	nyime	
dust	poussière	kure	
ashes	cendres	tue	
rubbish heap	tas des ordures	diŋi	
mud	boue	dɔmme	
clay	argile	duε	
dew	rosée	miŋga	cf. widespread #-mi for 'dew' in Niger-Congo
stone	pierre	shimyε	
pebble	cailloux	kɔyɔ	
sand	sable	nyime	
smoke	fumée	birenyε	
fire	feu	bire	
water	eau	vyε	
rain	pluie	zɔŋ	
cloud	nuage	poro	also in Sɔgɔ
lightning	éclair	shiren yaga	
rainy season	saison des pluies	nye	
dry season	saison sèche	nyeeru	
year	année	biŋ	
today	aujourd'hui	mwi	

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English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
yesterday	hier	nnye	
tomorrow	demain	bɔrɔ	
morning	matin	dinahũ	
evening	soir	kɔmpe	
day	jour	nneehũ	
night	nuit	yihũ	
moon	lune	ywe	Similar forms widespread in Dogon, e.g. Ambaleenŋe ywe
sun	soleil	nɛ	
star	étoile	toromye	
wind	vent	pɛvɛɛ	
sky	ciel	dege	
god	dieu	ŋara	
world	monde	gadyɛ̃	
ground	sol	gwyɛ	
river	fleuve	déù	Resembles widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Bunɔŋge <i>déw</i> , Ampari Pa <i>diwo</i>
stream	rivière	ŋgɔɔmbe	
pond, lake	marigot	tayaya	Resembles widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Tebul Ure <i>ta ya</i> , Ampari Pa <i>tay</i>
hill	colline	shimye	
bush	brousse	nna	
field	champ	bwo	
market	marché	kũ	
house	maison	ko	
room	chambre	yanden turumina	
wall	mur	kɔnɔ	
roof	toit	taŋa	also in Sɔŋo
shelter	abri, hangar	jaŋa	
granary	grenier	paŋgara	Resembles widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Nyambaleenŋe <i>paŋga</i> , Walo-Kumbe <i>pààŋgà</i>
well	puits	pɔɛ	
road, path	route, sentier	yembe	
village	village	dĩyà	
public place	place	ganda	
human being	personne	yiwere	<i>pl. yamba</i>
man	homme	gwɔ̃	
woman	femme	nyere	? cf. Some Dogon, e.g. Pirɔ̃ <i>yaana</i> .
child	enfant	yaame	
husband	mari	akande	
wife	épouse	pwye	
father	père	bóù	Dogon usually has ba, but some varieties have a back vowel, e.g. Tomo Kan <i>bɔ̃</i> , Miombo <i>bɔ̃ɔ̃</i>
mother	mère	na	Dogon usually has ni, but some varieties have a central vowel, e.g. Donno Sɔ̃ <i>na</i> , hence this might be proto-Dogon
friend	ami	mpa	
chief	chef	jyenshe	

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English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
hunter	chasseur	shishoŋo	
weaver	tisserand	dεge	
thief	voleur	punsh ^y ε	
doctor	guérisseur	sawre	
witch	sorcière	jɔnshe	
corpse	cadavre	ya	
blacksmith	forgeron	tuŋwa	
hunger	faim	muye	
horn	corne	sira	
tail	queue	tĩ	
egg	œuf	kũ	
wing	aile	siyɔn ko	
feather	plume	kuyu	Dogon typically has <i>kulε</i>
anthill	termitière/fourmilière	tunko	‘termite’ is tu in languages such as Bunoge, so this may be analysed as ‘termite house’
hole, pit	trou	dɔmbo	
hole in tree	trou dans arbre	gɔmbo	cf. Bunoge <i>kɔmbo</i> although this is typically ‘hole in ground’ for other Dogon lects
poison	poison	pwɔsɔ	< Fr.
load	fardeau, charge	tyere	
stick	bâton	gúná	
work	travail	wari	Resembles widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Bunoge <i>wale</i>
fighting	combat	kwere	
medicine	médicament	gúná	cf. ‘stick’. The conjunction of ‘medicine’, ‘stick’ and ‘tree’ is not uncommon in Niger-Congo
money	argent	tɔ̃	cf. Bunoge <i>tɔ̃dige</i>
shadow	ombre	sĩ	
thing	chose	kε	Jamsay has <i>kiyε</i> , so this might be a reduction
land/country	pays	gwyε	
sickness/disease	maladie	dégé	Common Dogon is <i>uru</i> , but Ampari Pa has <i>dege</i>
sore/wound	plaie	mwo	
scar	cicatrice	mwɔmpare	
head	tête	dege	
eye	oeil	shive	
face	visage	tegoro	cf. ‘forehead’
cheek	joue	akããwa	
forehead	front	tegoro	cf. ‘face’
nose	nez	shumbe	
ear	oreille	taŋa pl. taŋa-ne	Not similar to Dogon #sugu- but resembles Niger-Congo #-toN- ‘ear’
mouth	bouche	nɔ	resembles Niger-Congo #-nu- ‘mouth’
lip	lèvre	nɔ yege	
tooth	dent	nasiŋ	
tongue	langue	nanyere	
throat	gorge	gɔndo	
neck	cou	kwa	

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English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
chin	menton	shemu	
shoulder	épaule	ko	? Cf. Ambaleeŋge and other lects <i>kòlòkòlò</i>
armpit	aisselle	kumpa	
arm	bras	ni	Some resemblance to widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>nwe</i> , Ampari Pa <i>numa</i>
hand	main	niŋkuri	
elbow	coude	niŋkubume	
leg	jambe	bwe	
foot	piéd	bwe kumame	
thigh	cuisse	tòŋgòrò	
knee	genou	bwe kugume	
nail	ongle	kwòmí shògè	
breast (female)	sein	ɸye	
stomach	ventre	kuri	Some Dogon forms might be shortened versions of this e.g. Ampari Pa <i>kwe</i> , Bondum <i>kulu</i>
navel	nombril	bòŋgòrò	Resembles widespread Dogon forms, e.g. Bunoge <i>bòŋgale</i> , Nyambaleeŋge <i>bòŋgò</i>
back	dos	gi	
buttocks	fesses	tukuru	
skin	peau	kiŋge	
bone	os	nòrè	
rib	côte	sh ^y è	
blood	sang	yii (friction)	
tear	larme	shive uyè	‘eye water’
saliva	salive	nonyè	
sweat	sueur	ganawa	
urine	urine	sī	
hair	cheveux	kuyu	possible resemble to some Dogon forms e.g. Ampari Pa <i>kurye</i> .
liver	foie	bimye	
heart	coeur	bikini	
intestines	intestins	kuruwe	
lung	poumon	pùjépùjé	Common Dogon, e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>pùjùpùjù</i>
body	corps	noone	
meat	viande	ŋooŋ	
animal	animal	yirivende	
camel	chameau	nyòŋon mē	names of this form are widespread in the Dogon area
cow	vache	na	cf. common Dogon and also Niger-Congo #-na
bull	taureau	naaŋ gwòŋ	
goat	chèvre	bī	Naŋa has <i>beri</i> , which might be cognate but this is not common Dogon
sheep	mouton	ŋgamara	
pig	cochon	seŋgen nyaŋa	
horse	cheval	boo	
donkey	âne	kòròŋò	This is a widespread Sahelian lexeme all the

Roger Blench: Baṅgi me materials

English	Français	Baṅgi me	Commentary
			way to Ethiopia, occurring in Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan and Afroasiatic.
dog	chien	kure	resembles widespread roots for 'dog' in Indo-European and Afroasiatic
cat	chat	tuwɔ	
elephant	éléphant	taŋaŋ bogo	
buffalo	buffle	soŋon na	
lion	lion	yara	< Bambara
leopard	tigre/panthère	nwanke	
hyena	hyène	ture	Pirō has <i>tara</i> , which is conceivably cognate
genet	genette	gunu	
jackal	chacal	naaŋ kureme	
porcupine	porc-épic	kwish ^ɥ ē	
vervet monkey	singe	karambe	Resembles several Dogon languages, e.g. Walo-Kumbe <i>kérém</i> , Nyambaleŋge <i>kale</i> .
patas monkey	singe rouge	mmōntōri	
baboon	babouin	gumbe	Resembles several Dogon languages, e.g. Nyambaleŋge <i>gumbε</i>
galago	galago	na tōme	
squirrel	écureuil	gire	
hedgehog	hérisson	nyintu shiŋe	
aardvark	oryctérope	dōldōlme	
dassie	daman des rochers	kuye	
hare	lièvre	girimeme	
shrew	musaraigne	nyi	
house-bat	chauve-souris	gireme	
crocodile	crocodile, caïman	gyeŋge	
chameleon	caméléon	zigi ya gaŋme	
agama lizard	lézard agama	kimye	
gecko	gecko, salamandre	gedemye	
monitor lizard	iguane, varan	bā	
toad	crapaud	bumbu	
frog	grenouille	buguru	
tortoise	tortue	kpumye	
snake	serpent	kereke	
cobra	cobre	myenege	
python	python	yōŋgi	
snake I		mware	
snake II		don sōndɔ	
snake III		don kwɔ	
snake IV		durumina	
snake V		kereme	
snake VI		pōsekere	
fish	poisson	ŋɔ	
bird	oiseau	dɔrɔ	
chicken	poule	ɸye	
cock	coq	ɸye kaŋge	
guinea-fowl	pintade	pye	
vulture	vautour	kondo kun	
hawk	épervier	syε	

Roger Blench: Baŋgi me materials

English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
owl	hibou	gumbi	
bush-fowl	perdrix	shimu ɸye	
scorpion	scorpion	kɔn dungoro	
butterfly	papillon	yana sheme	
mosquito	moustique	gbwye	
spider	araignée	taare	
mason-wasp	guêpe-maçonne	gumbara	
bee	abeille	mirɔ	
housefly	mouche	ywuri	
louse	pou	sama	Resembles some Dogon, e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>femε</i> .
termite	termite/fourmi blanche	twye	
flying ant	fourmi volante	wiwentumbe	
locust	locuste	dankiyε	
mantis		kindi yiyanje	
oil	huile	nwye	Resembles some Dogon e.g. Yanda <i>ni</i> , Ampari Pa <i>nu</i> , in which case this is a Niger-Congo root.
fat	graisse	na nwye	'cow oil'
salt	sel	gyeŋje	
soup/sauce	sauce	pi	
food	nourriture/ <i>to</i>	jyeke	
beer	bière	kwɔnje	Resembles widespread Dogon roots, e.g. Yanda <i>kɔnzɔ</i> , Ampari Pa <i>kɔnje</i> .
handle	manche d'outil	shye	
sickle	faucille	kɔmɔ	for rice, fonio. cf. Bunoge <i>kɔmɔ</i> and other Dogon
fruit harvester	hameçon de fruit	doŋgo	cf. Bunoge <i>dɔŋgo</i> and other Dogon
firewood knife	couteau de bois de feu	kɔrɔ	cf. Bunoge <i>kɔrɔgɔ</i> and other Dogon
harvesting knife	couteau de moisson	kerekembe	cf. Bunoge <i>alkembε</i> and other Dogon
cutlass	machette		as French
iron	fer	gyeŋge	
axe big	hache grande	dyewe	
adze	herminette	dɔwe	
sowing hoe	semoir	ciŋgelme	
hoe I	houe I	damma	
hoe II	houe II	damba	< Bambara
knife	couteau	ba	Widespread Niger-Congo root but not Dogon. Thus
razor	rasoir	shiribe	general Dogon < Fuldulde
anvil	enclume	teye shimye	
hammer	marteau	shimɔre	
pincers	pincés	kampaw	
awl	alène	too	
tweezers	tire l'épine	kamba	
bellows	soufflet	pupa	
cooling bowl	bol d'eau	tɔmbe	
broom	balaie	gyēre	
bag	sac	yembe	cf. some Dogon e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>jembu</i>

Roger Blench: Baṅgi me materials

English	Français	Baṅgi me	Commentary
fireplace	foyer	vwe	cf. Ampari Pa <i>vɔ̃</i> , though this is not the usual Dogon word
shoe	chaussure	kwəkɛ	
hat	chapeau	bambara	cf. Bunoge <i>bambula</i> , Ampari Pa <i>bampra</i>
clothing	vêtement	sɔ̃	cf. Ampari Pa <i>sɔ̃</i>
necklace	collier	kwaramã	
ring	bague	durumbe	
bracelet	bracelet	gɛŋgɛmɛ	
mortar	mortier	swakɛ	
pestle	pilon	swa	
pot	pot	wure	
pot I	canari I	paya bogo	
head-pad	coussinet	cwyã	
basket	panier	te	
winnowing tray	tamis	yere	
sieve	crible	tɛmɛ	
mat	natte	kɛŋgere	
needle	aiguille	misina	
spear	lance	pɔŋje	
bow	arc	tɔŋgyɛ	? cf. some Dogon e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>tɔ̃</i> nut #ta is a widespread Niger-Congo root for 'bow'
arrow	flèche	mbye	
quiver	carquois	yɛmbɛ	see 'bag'
rope	corde	boyɛ	
stool	tabouret	kun	
door	porte	minna	
door-frame	seuil	kunɔ	
bed	lit	tãwa	
fence	clôture	gyɛmɔ	
ladder	échelle	pɛ̃	
canoe	pirogue	kyĩ	cf. Ampari, Bunɔge <i>kĩ</i> . This is likely to be a loanword in all these languages since there are no rivers on their territory.
paddle	pagaie	yiimbe	
bee-hive	ruche	mirum paya	
Music	Instruments de musique		
long cylindrical drum with two heads	tambour	kwɔŋge	long cylindrical drum with two heads
hourglass drum	tambour	kaluŋgo	This is the common savanna <i>tambour-sablier</i> used by the Hasua and many other groups under this name
hollow logs	blocs de bois	pɔrɔmpɔ	
flute	flûte traversière	taare	
whistle	sifflet	pir mɛ	
rattle	hochet calebasse	tumba	
transverse horn I	corne	puru me	

Roger Blench: Baṅgi me materials

English	Français	Baṅgi me	Commentary
iron bell	clochette de fer	leṅguru	
Numbers	Nombres		
one	un	tiye	cf. Tommo-So and Teṅu Kan <i>tii</i>
two	deux	yindo	
three	trois	tarō	common Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan root #-tar
four	quatre	nne	common Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan root #-na
five	cinq	nundi	Many Dogon languages have <i>nundi</i> which may be related
six	six	kere	Dogon forms are always # kure etc.
seven	sept	kiye	
eight	huit	saage	cf. Nyambaleenḡe <i>seege</i> , but common Dogon is <i>seero</i>
nine	neuf	tege	? cf. Donno So <i>tugɔ</i> and similar
ten	dix	kure	
eleven	onze	kekure na ketere	10 + 1
twelve	douze	kekure na yindo	10 + 2
twenty	vingt	tāāwa	
twenty-one	vingt et un	tāāwa na ketere	
thirty	trente	taana na dyekure	
forty	quarante	debe	cf. Nyambaleenḡe <i>dee</i> ,
fifty	cinquante	debe na dyekure	
sixty	soixante	tama shigo	
seventy	soixante-dix	tama shigo na budukure	
eighty	quatre-vingt	yoro	
ninety	quatre-vingt-dix	yoro na budukure	
one hundred	cent	yoro na tāāwa	
white	blanc	kishiwā	cf. Nyambaleenḡe <i>efima</i> (but this is exceptional for Dogon which is usually <i>tombo</i>)
black	noir	kipore	
red	rouge	kubwye	
green	vert	gujukara	
yellow	jaune	dwyembū	
heavy	lourd	mere	
light	léger	beme	
large	grand	kanyoro	
small	petit	kirame	
many	beaucoup/nombreux	pē	
few	peu	kirame	
all	tout	pē	
thin	mince	biriwi	
wide	large	wetḡo	
narrow	étroit	twoy	
hard	dur	kolo	
soft	doux/tendre	dara	
sweet	doux/sucré	de	also 'good'

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English	Français	Baṅgi me	Commentary
bitter	amer	shimu	
sour	acide	shimu	
deep	profond	yugu	
long	long	bende	
short	court	kurume	
good	bon	de, gāu	also 'sweet'
bad	mauvais	begaũ	'not good'
dirty	sale	diṅgi	
fat	gros	banu ~ bāũ	
near	proche/près	wereyerwe	
far	loin/lointain	dahakewe	
beautiful	beau	gaũ	
ugly	laid, vilain	kabegõ	
hot	chaud	wa	
cold	froid, frais	dimmo	
strong	fort	shiã	
weak	faible	shiã beway	
ripe	mûr	biway	
unripe	cru/vert	kikara	
full	plein	dẽway	
empty	vide	haketere	
Verbs	Verbes		
accompany	accompagner	nawere	
add to	ajouter	dianki	
announce	annoncer	naniye	
answer	répondre	kìará	
arrive	arriver	nu	
ask for	demander	sigã	
be born	naître	kura	
beat	battre	dárá	
begin	commencer	tìiná	
bite	mordre	taṅwa	
blow (mouth)	souffler (la bouche)	piyu	
blow (wind)	souffler (vent)	pẽvere	
borrow	emprunter	kõnimi	
braid	tresser	munu	cf. Nyambaleeṅe <i>mundu</i> ,
break	casser	pẽde	
breathe	respirer	nyu	
bring	apporter	dugunõ	
build	construire, bâtir	kuuma	
burn	brûler	daga	
bury	enterrer	mugõ	
buy	acheter	ywa	
call	appeler	yendu	cf. Yanda <i>yanda</i> , Walo-Kumbe <i>nyinù</i> ,
carry on back	porter sur le dos	kumbõrõ	
carry on head	porter sur la tête	twere	
chew	mâcher	tãwa	Not Dogon, but #-ta is a widespread Niger-Congo root for 'chew'. Cf. Westermann #ta + N <i>kauen</i> .
choose	choisir	kõmye	

Roger Blench: Bangi me materials

English	Français	Bangi me	Commentary
chop down	abattre	dɔyɔ	
chop/slice	trancher	gwyendɛ	
close	fermer	shɔgɔ	
comb	se peigner	piindu	? cf. Ampari Pa <i>biinta</i> .
come	venir	nu	
cook	cuisiner	dɛnɛ	
count	compter	nyiwa	
cover	couvrir	shɔgɔ	
crawl	ramper	kukalanda	
cry out	crier	pɛ̃	
cut with axe	couper	sere	
cut with knife	couper	dɔgɔ	
dance	danser	tūwa	
desire	désirer	mwidá	
die	mourir	yaway	
dig	creuser/labourer	kiinu	
divide	diviser	pende	
do	faire	dugolo	
draw water	puiser	ywɛ̃	
dream	rêver	jwɛ̃	
drink	boire	nnyɛ	Common Dogon is nɔ , but Toro Tegu has nɛ .
drive away	chasser/éloigner/repou sser	pɛreni	
drop	laisser tomber	ciwɛ	
dry up	sécher	gɔm(ɛ)rɛ	
eat	manger	jiya	<i>jie</i> in Sogo, and possibly related to Niger-Congo root #di.
enter	entrer	minde	
extinguish	éteindre	jiŋwe	
fall	tomber	ciwɛ	
fill	remplir	jaŋway	
find	trouver	kara	
finish	terminer	buŋway	
fly (v.)	voler (oiseaux/avion)	pindo	Worldwide #pVr for ‘to fly’
fold	plier	kuŋwa	
follow	suivre	kɔɔnpe	
forbid	interdire	bentaga	
forget	oublier	tembaki	
gather	réunir	máŋgára	
give	donner	nando	? cf. Dogul Dom nda , though –ndo is likely to be an affix in Bangi me. Westermann PWS #na <i>geben</i> .
give birth	accoucher	kikura	
go	aller	were	
go down	descendre	sā	
go out	sortir	ba	
go up	monter	ywe	
greet	saluer	tiya	cf. Nyambaleenge <i>tiya</i> ,
grill	griller	siwa	

Roger Blench: Baṅgi me materials

English	Français	Baṅgi me	Commentary
grind	broyer	naṅwa	cf. Nyambaleenḡe <i>namu</i> ,
grow/increase	grandir, croître	puna	
hear	entendre	no	Mombo of Pignari has nunde . Widespread Niger-Congo ‘ear’
help	aider	bɔyɔ	
hide	cacher	daanda	
hold	tenir	taya	
insult	insulter	tuge	
jump	sauter	pindo	also ‘fly’
kill	tuer	ywùrá	
know	savoir	shure	
laugh	rire	ma	The –ma element is both Dogon, e.g Yanda <i>manda</i> , Ampari Pa <i>mati</i> and Niger-Congo, e.g. PWS -mua- (mu-) <i>lachen</i>
learn	étudier/apprendre	kitimɔrɔ	also ‘try’
lend	prêter	taw	
lick	lécher	dɛ	cf. Dogon forms e.g. Ampari Pa <i>dega</i>
lie	mentir	gyɛ	
lie down	être étendu	bunya barnda	
lift onto head	soulever	pɔmyɛ	
light	allumer	daya	
like/love	aimer	mma	? cf. Walo-Kumbe <i>mbáy</i> ,
limp	boiter	segena	
listen	écouter	nnɔrɛ	cf. word for ‘ear’
look	regarder	shura	
look for	chercher	naṅ kɔmbɔrɔ	
lose	perdre	tewe	
marry	épouser	dɔmyɛ	
measure	mesurer	tɔŋɔ	cf. Nyambaleenḡe <i>tuywa</i> ,
milk	traire	pɔrɔ	
mix	mélanger	swɔ	
open	ouvrir	kyo	
peel	éplucher	mbunda	
pick up	ramasser	kɔmbi	
pierce	percer	tugur	
plaster	crépir	ndara	
play	jouer	saṅa	
pound	piler	sa	
pour	verser	tumbere	? cf. Nyamableenḡe <i>tuwɔ</i>
pull	tirer	jimba	cf. Nyamableenḡe <i>jimbo</i>
push	pousser	tembi	cf. Ampari Pa <i>tumbɔ</i> ,
put	poser/placer	pye	
put	mettre	tinde	
rain	pleuvoir	nkwa ati	
receive/accept	recevoir/accepter	taw	
refuse	refuser	nyaaṅu	
remember	se souvenir	miru	
resemble	ressembler	dɔŋlashe	
return	revenir	nuwã	
ride	monter un animal	ywe	

Roger Blench: Baŋgi me materials

English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
rub	frotter	giera	
run	courir	tigire	
say	dire	diga	cf. Jamsay Tegu <i>tigaara</i> , Bunoge <i>taga</i> .
scratch	gratter	koyɔ	
see	voir	shura	
sell	vendre	tùná	cf. Ampari Pa <i>tura</i>
send	envoyer	tùná	cf. Yanda <i>tɔŋo</i> , and possibly widespread Niger-Congo root #-tom. E.g. Dagare <i>tum</i> , Nupe <i>tũ</i> , Common Bantu <i>#tum-</i>
sew	coudre	shio	
shake	secouer	maga	
sharpen	aiguiser	giira	
shave	se raser	ka	cf. Ampari Pa <i>ka</i> ,
shoot	tirer	ta	Common Niger-Congo root, widespread in West Africa, but not apparently in Dogon. cf. PWS <i>-tà-</i> . Related to <i>#-ta</i> ‘bow’.
show	montrer	tere	? cf. Nyambaleenŋe <i>taro</i>
sing	chanter	nyweme	
sit down	s'asseoir/être assis	tiri	
sleep	dormir	do	
smell	sentir	nyu	Not Dogon, but Niger-Congo. cf. PWS <i>#-nyu-</i> (+a), e.g. Kuwaa (Kru) <i>ɲũ</i> , Eggon (Plateau) <i>ɲun</i> .
sneeze	éternuer	oco	cf. English Atchoo!
snore	ronfler	korokoro	May be sound-symbolic, but cf. Nyambaleenŋe <i>gɔrrɔ</i> .
soak	faire tremper	miro	
sow	semmer	severe	
spit	cracher	tuyu	cf. Yanda <i>too</i> , but also other Niger-Congo. PWS <i>tú-</i> , Gonja <i>tù?</i> etc.
stay	rester	barama	
steal	voler	kũre	
stick onto	coller	ndara	also ‘plaster’
sting	piquer	tuguru	
stroll	se promener	kɔmɔrɔ	
suck	sucer/téter	mɔŋji	
swallow	avalier	mira	widespread root found in both Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan for ‘swallow’, ‘throat’, ‘neck’
sweep	balayer	gyendi	
swell	gonfler	pɛvɛɛ	
swim	nager	jìná	
take	prendre	nyaw	cf. Tebul Ure <i>ɲaan</i> , but this is exceptional inside Dogon
take off	ôter	bundi	
taste	goûter	namebe	
teach	enseigner	kara	
tear	déchirer	pɛrnde	
tell	raconter	nakembi	
think	penser	miini	cf. Yanda <i>maana</i> ,

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English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
throw	jeter	guyuru	
tie	nouer/attacher	ba	Not Dogon unless Nyambaleeŋge pago is cognate but a widespread Niger-Congo root. cf. PWS #báli <i>binden</i>
touch	toucher, palper	daga	
tremble	trembler	maya	
try	essayer	kitimɔɔ	also 'learn'
turn over	se retourner	gɔmiyɛ	
twist	tordre	nwiwa	
undress	se déshabiller	bunda	
unfold	déplier	sannara	
untie	dénouer/détacher	piindu	
urinate	uriner	shī	
vomit	vomir	inye ndi	
wait	attendre	dɛngu	
walk	marcher	wɔɛ	
want/need	vouloir/avoir besoin	mma	
wash s.t. I	laver q.c.	kenem	
wash s.t. II	laver q.c.	sanam	
wash self	se laver	tura	
weave	tisser	dɛgɛ	
weed	sarcler/arracher les herbes	dye	
whisper	chuchoter	guyɛmpɔɔ	
whistle	siffler	kɔɔɔ	
wipe (nose)	se moucher	sié	
write	écrire	nyɔŋɔnde	cf. Ampari Pa <i>nɔnda</i> ,
yawn	bâiller	ŋawme	
Q words	Questions		
where?	où	kote	
when?	quand	nene	
how?	comment	numindo	
how many?	combien	nii	
why?	pourquoi	nnesaw	
who?	qui	yya	
what?	quoi	nneshi	? cf. Miombo Makori <i>ŋgesie</i>
Others	Autres		
here	ici	ima	cf. Bunɔge <i>ma</i> ,
there	là	keve	
left	à gauche	bara	
right	à droite	sive	
north	nord	sajo	
south	sud	ballere	< Fulfulde
east	est	puyɛ	
west	ouest	nnafe	
Pronouns			
I, me	je, moi	myû	Dogon has #mi as does other Niger-Congo
you	toi	àw	Dogon usually has a single back vowel, either <i>o</i> or <i>u</i> and often a glottal stop.
he, she, it	lui, elle	kaw	

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English	Français	Baŋgi me	Commentary
we, us	nous	nne	Ampari Pa has <i>ni</i> ,
you pl.	vous	áw	
they, them	ils	áw	
everyone	tout le monde	karu	

Plants

English	Français	Baŋgi Me	Commentary
Cassava ²	manioc	bananku	Widespread form in Dogon and other nearby languages and probably related to languages further south, e.g. Twi banku. Cassava is a recent introduction.
Sweet potato ³	patate douce	kùù	Widespread form in Dogon and other nearby languages, e.g. Nyambaleeŋge <i>ku</i> . May be related to Niger-Congo roots for 'yam'. Sweet potato is a recent introduction.
Wild yam	igname de brousse	kùù pɔɛ	
Wild yam	igname de brousse	jɛkɛ	
Sorghum ⁴	grand mil	sinya	not usual Dogon cf. Bunɔŋe <i>finja</i> .
Bulrush millet ⁵	petit mil	damyɛ	
Fonio ⁶	fonio	wuyuwye	
Maize* ⁷	mais	darama yere	cf. Bunɔŋe <i>dilima</i> .
Rice* ⁸	riz	gɔm myɛ	
Cowpea ⁹	nyebe	nnyɛ	
Bambara groundnut ¹⁰	pois de terre	tiga yɛ kurumyɛ	
Groundnut ¹¹	arachide	tiga yɛ bɛndɛ	
Tiger-nut ¹²	souche à manger	muwɔ myɛ	
Nutgrass ¹³	souche à parfum	muwɔ shiro	
Garden egg ¹⁴	aubergine	taŋ koro	
Okra ¹⁵	gombo	wa myɛ	as in Sɔŋo
Birdseye chili* ¹⁶	piment	dandi	< F., Sɔŋo

² (*Manihot esculenta*)

³ (*Ipomoea batatas*)

⁴ (*Sorghum bicolor*)

⁵ (*Pennisetum spp.*)

⁶ (*Digitaria exilis*)

⁷ (*Zea mays*)

⁸ (*Oryza sativa/ glaberrima*)

⁹ (*Vigna unguiculata*)

¹⁰ (*Vigna subterranea*)

¹¹ (*Arachis hypogaea*)

¹² (*Cyperus esculentus*)

¹³ (*Cyperus rotundus*)

¹⁴ (*Solanum melongena*)

¹⁵ (*Abelmoschus esculentus*)

Roger Blench: Bangi me materials

English	Français	Bangi Me	Commentary
Onion	oignon	yagu	
Garlic ¹⁷	ail	tumi	< T.
Tomato ¹⁸	tomate	tamati	< Fr.
Melon (other) ¹⁹	courge	təŋgɔrɔ	
Kenaf ²⁰	kenaf	shɔɛ	
Sesame seeds ²¹	sesam	para	cf. some Dogon, e.g. Ana <i>palle</i> ,
Gourd (Generic)	calebasse	kwyɛ	? cf. some Dogon e.g. Ampari Pa <i>koye</i>
Gourd-bottle ²²	bouteille	tumba	cf. Nyambaleeŋge <i>tumbe</i>
warty gourd	calebasse à furoncles	kurundundu	
gourd spoon	louche	kɛŋkɛm mpa	
Other gourds	autres Calebasses	tɔŋge	used to water gardens
Cotton	coton	nogu	
Fan-palm ²³	rônier	tĩ	
Baobab ²⁴	arbre de pain	bore	
Shea tree ²⁵	karité	wɔrɔ	
Locust tree ²⁶	nééré	jwɛ	
<i>Acacia albida</i>	balanzan	kiyɛvɛ	
Tamarind ²⁷	tamarinier	ŋga	
tree sp.	arbre	tɔŋ	F. ede
tree sp.	arbre	mu	F. gumeji
tree sp.	arbre	kɔɔ myɛ	F. nyelbe
tree sp.	arbre	dunju	
tree sp.	arbre	pɔrɔwɔ	F. peguje
tree sp.	arbre	gbɔnɔ myɛ	F. bantineje
tree sp.	arbre	kɔŋgɔrɔ	F. saman podí
tree sp.	arbre	kwa	F. duneeri
tree sp.	arbre	kwĩ	leaves used for soup
liana sp.	arbre	ka	F. poguje

7. Conclusion: the classification of Bangi Me

The wordlist gives a substantial lexical sample of Bangi Me and it is reasonable to assume that it is adequate to classify the language. It has been cross-checked against a wide sample of neighbouring Dogon languages

¹⁶ (*Capsicum annum*)

¹⁷ (*Allium sativum*)

¹⁸ (*Lycopersicon esculentum*)

¹⁹ (*Cucumis* spp)

²⁰ (*Hibiscus cannabinus*)

²¹ (*Sesamum indicum*)

²² (*Lagenaria siceraria*)

²³ (*Borassus aethiopum*)

²⁴ (*Adansonia digitata*)

²⁵ (*Vitellaria paradoxa*)

²⁶ (*Parkia biglobosa*)

²⁷ (*Tamarindus indica*)

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as well as synoptic lists of other nearby families such as Dogon, Gur and Kwa. The following conclusions can be drawn;

1. Borrowings from nearby languages, such as Fulfulde, Bambara, Sɔ̀gɔ [=Niononkhe] are relatively few in number. Lexical data on neighbouring Fulfulde lects is poor and the –de ending on some words may point to a few more unidentified loans.
2. Despite the early observation of Bertho that Bangi Me had affinities with Gur, these appear to be very slight and mostly links to Niger-Congo in general.
3. The possibility that Bangi me is some type of ‘special’ or ‘secret’ language depending on lexical substitution can be excluded, both by the similarity between lexemes recorded by different researchers at different times and the external cognates with Niger-Congo not reflected in Dogon.
4. Although Bangi me has a number of cognates with Dogon, these are few in relation to the overall lexical database and are generally not in the core lexicon (body parts, numbers, basic verbs). More interestingly, where there are cognates, they tend to be in languages in close geographical proximity such as Bunɔ̀ge and Nyambaleenge. This rather suggests that there were once more languages related to Bangi me and that its vocabulary exists as a substrate as these populations were Dogonised.
5. In general, African language isolates often look like relic forager populations, even where these have turned to agriculture (e.g. the Laal and Jalaa). The Hadza and Kwadi remain foragers, although encapsulated. However, Bangi me has a striking repertoire of agricultural terms quite distinct from the Dogon and neighbouring peoples, which points to a pre-existing farming culture.

From these results it seems likely that the Bangi me are the last representatives of a farming population of the Dogon Plateau, assimilated by the Dogon expansion (? ca. 3000 years ago). As such their language and culture are of great importance and clearly deserve intensive study.

As to the affiliation of Bangi me, the data suggest two choices; either Bangi me is a very early branching of Niger-Congo which has lost a great deal of core vocabulary or it is a language isolate that has interacted with Niger-Congo at an early stage. Its grammar is generally very Dogon-like, and Dogon itself hardly resembles Niger-Congo. Without other related languages, it may be very difficult to resolve this issue. Hausa, for example, is clearly a Chadic language, yet it has apparently borrowed key lexemes from neighbouring Niger-Congo languages, such as the word for ‘meat’ and ‘two’ (Hoffmann 1970). This may well be the case with Bangi me. It is therefore most probable that Bangi me should be added to the select list of African isolates.

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Websites

Roger Blench's website where comparative Dogon wordlists can be found

<http://www.rogerblench.info/Language%20data/Niger-Congo/Dogon/Dogon%20page.htm>

Jeffrey Heath's website where various lexical and grammatical materials on Dogon can be found

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jheath/>

Site of the MAESAO project for general information on archaeology and prehistory can be found

<http://anthro.unige.ch/lap/ounjoujou/nouvelles.html>