

# **NOMINAL AFFIXING IN THE KAINJI LANGUAGES**

**of**

## **NORTHWESTERN and CENTRAL NIGERIA**

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## **Abbreviations and conventions**

A	any central vowel
C	consonant
S	s or ʃ
N	any nasal
V	vowel

## **ABSTRACT**

The Kainji languages of northwest and central Nigeria remain little-researched and sparsely described. Their nominal morphology strongly resembles Bantu typologically, but finding segmental cognates remains problematic. They show systems of alternating prefixes and alliterative concord, as well as diminutive and augmentative prefixes and CV- prefixes with underspecified vowels, where the -V of the prefix harmonises with the stem vowel. The limited segmental cognates point to radical restructuring through affix loss and renewal. Indeed one language, Shen, has lost all nominal morphology and it is severely reduced in some branches. Reshe is typologically similar to other Kainji languages, but the affixes seem to have been completely restructured. The paper gives an overview of the literature on Kainji and then describes the nominal affixing in individual branches. It concludes by suggesting what assumptions can be made about Kainji as a whole, with a focus on the nasal prefixes (or their absence).

Keywords: Historical linguistics; Kainji languages; Niger-Congo; noun classes

## **1. Introduction: the Kainji languages**

Kainji (formerly Plateau 1a,b) is a family of some eighty languages or lects spoken in northwestern and central Nigeria. A large subset of these, the East Kainji languages, are spoken north and west of the Jos Plateau and are geographically separate from the other branches. Rowlands (1962), Greenberg (1963), Gerhardt (1989) and Crozier & Blench (1992) treat ‘East’ and ‘West’ Kainji as a primary division of the family, but there is no linguistic evidence to support this. Kainji languages are characterised by an extremely diverse lexicon and morphology, and it is only comparatively recently that their unity and distinctiveness have been recognised. They form one branch of the Benue-Congo family, itself a major division of Niger-Congo, and their nearest relatives are Plateau and Jukunoid (Williamson 1971, 1989).

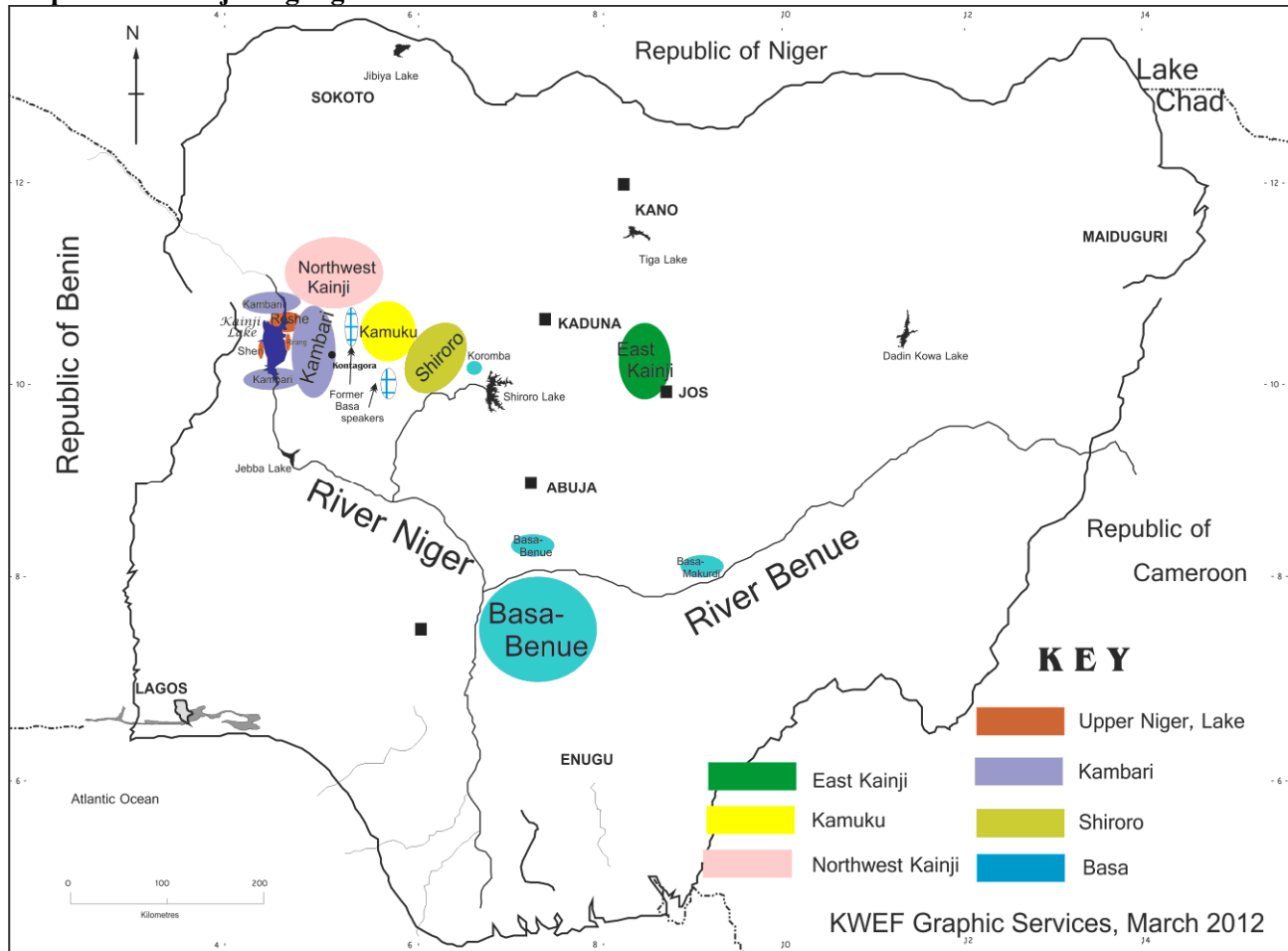
Typologically, they are difficult to characterise, but the more conservative branches have both nominal and verbal morphology highly reminiscent of Bantu (as indeed the *-tu* root for ‘person’). The nominal systems are characterised by alternating affixes and concord on adjectives and some numerals. In some branches these affixes have either collapsed or been heavily restructured, resulting in contrastive consonant length as well as alternating C- prefixes, and rare systems of double-affixing. At least one language, Shen, has lost all trace of nominal affixes and has compensated by evolving a complex tonal inventory. The alternating affixes of one language, Reshe, show almost no segmental cognates with the remainder of the group and they must somehow have developed an innovative system. Some branches have complex verbal morphology highly reminiscent of Bantu, with verbs taking long strings of suffixes. Word order is typically S (AUX) V O. Kainji languages are grossly under-represented in standard typological sources such as WALS and the summaries of existing material are quite inaccurate.

Most of the West Kainji languages are still commonly spoken, which is surprising, given that some are encapsulated by Hausa (McGill & Blench 2012). However, East Kainji languages, with few exceptions, are severely threatened and some have disappeared in recent decades. A few Kainji languages have significant numbers of speakers, but most populations are under 10,000. West Kainji languages have been the subject of numerous literacy projects and these community initiatives appear to be sustainable. Kainji languages otherwise have a very low profile in the media.

The human geography of Kainji-speaking peoples is very striking. As Map 1 shows, there are outliers of Kainji spoken near Makurdi far from the likely homeland area in the northwest. It is likely that the dispersal of the Basa peoples is a consequence of the destructive effects of the nineteenth century slave-raiding era, although this is not confirmed by recorded oral traditions. However, the twentieth century has also seen important migrations. The Hun-Saare peoples have formed a number of colonies outside their home area to take advantage of more fertile farmland.

Kainji languages are spoken in quite inaccessible areas, and even today, many languages are reached only through arduous motorbike trails. This explains why a comprehensive list of these languages is still to be established. The first attempt to compile a comparative Kainji wordlist was the work of Clark Regnier, a young SIL linguist who began surveys in the late 1980s. Clark was unfortunately the victim of a fatal motor accident in 1992. From the dry season of 2010, a joint programme to physically visit and record the speech of as many Kainji communities as possible has been undertaken by Roger Blench and Stuart McGill. Much of the data used in this paper was collected by the author and Stuart McGill in 2010-2012 and remains unpublished, although an extensive comparative wordlist is available online. At the same time, there has been considerable progress in the development of individual languages, strongly associated with literacy and bible translation projects (McGill & Blench 2012).

Map 1. The Kainji languages



The first lexical material on a Kainji language appears to be the *Kambali* lists in Koelle (1854). Johnston (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 the known 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 be called East and West Kainji (as Plateau 1a and b) as well as Tarokoid and Jukunoid. 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). 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 manuscript. The major unpublished sources are listed in Table 22 in the Appendix.

As our knowledge of the Kainji languages has improved, we can better characterise their internal structure and relationships. The main points are;

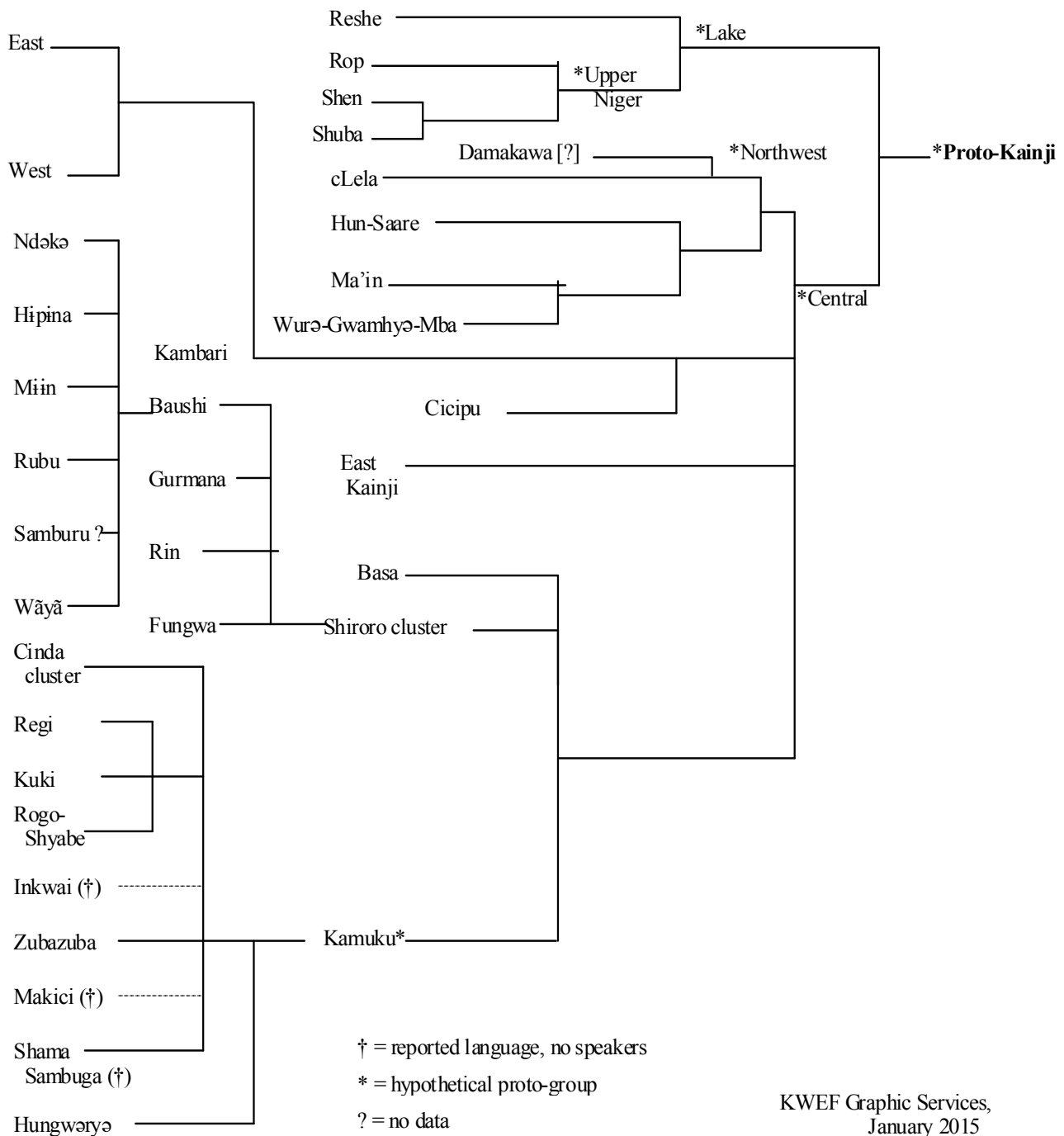
1. The distinction established in Rowlands (1962) and Greenberg (1963) between ‘East’ and ‘West’ Kainji (1a and 1b in Greenberg) proves to have no linguistic validity.

## Kainji nominal affixes: main text Roger Blench Circulation draft

2. Kainji divides into a number of distinct subgroups, each with highly marked but extremely diverse morphological characteristics.
3. Although Proto-Kainji has structural properties similar to proto-Bantu, segmental cognates are difficult to establish

Figure 1 shows a tentative subclassification of the Kainji languages. I have proposed names for some nodes at different classificatory levels. If further work confirms the tree outlined here then these names can either be adopted or replaced by something more culturally appropriate.

**Figure 1. Subclassification of Kainji Languages**



## **Kainji nominal affixes: main text Roger Blench Circulation draft**

This chapter<sup>1</sup> provides an overview of Kainji nominal affixes and associated concord systems. For reasons of space, information about other aspects of these languages is very reduced and the material is strictly confined to the data available for actual languages and what can be reasonably reconstructed. A number of publications and theses have described the noun class systems for individual languages (e.g. Crozier (1984), McGill (2009), Paterson (2012)) but little has been written concerning the overall pattern they form. The chapter begins with a summary table of nominal affixing systems and then goes through what is known about each branch. A tentative model of the situation that can be attributed to proto-Kainji is given in a final section together with a summary of the evidence for nasal affixes in Kainji.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the quality of data for different branches is very uneven and that as the great majority is unpublished it should be treated as preliminary. It is unfortunate that a lack of pressure to publish means that preliminary language analyses circulate in manuscript and are made available by the authors on an informal basis. In particular, individual authors use affix numbering devised for a specific language and thus comparison across languages is more difficult.

### **2. Nominal affixes: overview**

Given the prevalence of alternating affixes and concord in some Kainji languages, it is reasonable to suppose that a system of this type was present in proto-Kainji. Nonetheless, the synchronic diversity within the family is such that these systems are lost or severely reduced in many languages. Table 1 summarises the situation in various Kainji subgroups.

**Table 1. Nominal affixing in Kainji Languages**

<b>Branch</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Reshe		Reshe	Alternating affixes and concord
Lake	Rerang	Rop	Alternating affixes and concord
	Laru	Shuba	Affix system very reduced
		Shen	Affix system absent
Northwest	Lela	cLela	Reduced affix system with C- prefixes and concord
	Hun	tHun/sSaare	Reduced affix system with C- prefixes and concord
	Gwamhi	Gwamhyə, Wurə, Mba	Reduced affix system with C- prefixes and concord
	ut-Ma'in	All	Alternating affixes and concord
	?	Damakawa	Moribund
Basa		Basa Kontagora	Extinct
		Basa-Gumna	Extinct
		Koromba	Affix system functional
		Basa-Gurara	No information
		Basa-Benue	Three-term alternating affixes and concord
		Basa-Makurdi	Affix system in breakdown
Kambari		CiShingini	Alternating affixes and concord
		Tsivadi	Alternating affixes and concord
		Baangi	Alternating affixes and concord
		Tsikimba	Alternating affixes and concord
		Agwara	Alternating affixes and concord
		Cicipu	Alternating affixes and concord
Kamuku		Shama	Alternating affixes and concord
		Rogo-Shyabe	Alternating affixes and concord

<sup>1</sup> This chapter could not have been prepared without access to a substantial body of unpublished data, and much of the material has been re-analysed from this. I would particularly like to thank Stuart McGill, David Crozier and John Nengel for long-term collaboration, and Appollos Agamalafiya, Clark Regnier (†), Steve Dettweiler, David Heath, Becky Paterson, Katherine Mort, Jennifer Davey for access to data.

Branch	Subgroup	Language	Comment
		Səgə̌muk	Alternating affixes and concord
		Cinda	Alternating affixes and concord
		Regi	Alternating affixes and concord
		Kuki	Alternating affixes and concord
		Zubazuba	Alternating affixes and concord
		Hungwə̌ryə	Complex alternating affixes and concord
Shiroro		Fungwa	Alternating affixes and concord
		Rin	Alternating affixes and concord
		Wə̌gə	Unclear since moribund
		Gurmana	Alternating affixes and concord
	Baushi	All	Affix system in partial breakdown
East		All	Alternating affixes and concord

### 3. Nominal affixes by subgroup

#### 3.1 Reshe<sup>2</sup>

Tsureshe, the language of the Reshe people, is spoken at the northern end of Lake Kainji (Dettweiler & Dettweiler 1993b). Reshe has a characteristic Niger-Congo noun class system, reminiscent of Bantu in several ways, although the class pairings are much reduced<sup>3</sup>. The noun stem is preceded by a class marker, either V- or CV-, which alternates between singular and plural and shows concord with adjectives and other parts of speech. There are six paired classes, four of which clearly have semantic motivation: those containing human beings, animals, body parts and mass nouns, although the class including body parts is more weakly defined than the others (Table 2). Class 6, which is invariant, includes mass nouns such as liquids, powders and similar items which have no plurals. Membership of the other two noun classes appears to be arbitrary. Reshe also has separate animacy-marking, and a pronoun of the general shape IV- frequently appears in a concord slot, despite not directly reflecting the concord system. Table 2 summarises Reshe noun-class pairings;

**Table 2. Reshe noun-class affix pairings**

No.	sg.	No	pl.	Semantic content
1	u~w	2	bV-	human
3	hi~hy-	4	i~y-	animals and borrowed words
6	mV-		invariant	mass nouns
7	ú-	8	á-	body parts
9	ú~w-	10	tʃ~ts(u)~ø-	miscellaneous
11	ri~ry-	12	a-	miscellaneous

The tones of the prefixes are highly variable and it seems cannot be assigned an underlying height. There is no evidence for tonal changes in the stem between singular and plural and the tone of the plural prefix is always the same as the singular.

There are a small number of unusual items, shown in Table 3, that do not form part of the noun class pairings given above. These are invariant nouns, either mass nouns or inherently plural.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this chapter, class prefixes are deleted in language and ethnic group names to create a uniform reference term.

<sup>3</sup> Work on Reshe was conducted jointly between the author and Appollos Agamalaŋfiya in 2010 and 2011. See also the unpublished Boettger & Boettger (1967)



**Table 3. Extra-systemic Reshe nouns**

Tsureshe	Gloss
ěhě	tears
eena	waves
ə-ʃimà	fat
ə-rira	river

Surprisingly, if they are replaced by a pronoun in a sentence, the pronoun is *əbə*, usually associated with humans.

Reshe, like many languages in this region, has distinctive incorporated possessives for kin terms and related nouns for persons. The affixes appear on the surface to have class-pair alternation, but the associated concord is that of the underlying noun. So, for example, in the word for ‘age-mate’, the mu/ba alternation strongly recalls Bantu prefixes, but in Reshe these probably originate with compounded possessive pronouns;

sg.	pl.	Gloss	Literal
mu-banɛ	ba-	age-mate, colleague	lit. ‘my another’

### 3.2 Lake (Shen and Rerang)

Like the Reshe, the Laru (Shen) and Lopa (Rerang) are fishing peoples who live around the edge of Lake Kainji. Research in 2011 and 2012 showed that ‘Lopa’ is in fact two distinct languages. Even more surprisingly, despite the ethnic label Rerang and the assertion of a common culture between the Rop and the Shuba, Shuba is clearly a conservative type of Shen, but which still retains at least some nominal morphology. The correct terminology for the Lake languages is shown in Table 4;

**Table 4. Ethnonyms and reference names of the Lake Group**

Usual name	Group name	One person	People	Language	Reference Name
Laru		Shen		Shen gwe	Shen
Lopa	Rerang	dòrírǎŋ	ò:rírǎŋ	òl:èrǎŋ	
	Rop	dòróp	ò:róp	òl:óp	Rop
	Shuba				Shuba

Shen exhibits a virtually complete loss of the nominal morphology system. All nouns either have no plural, or a plural suffix *bà(u)*. Shen has come under heavy influence from the Busa language, which is Mande and thus also has these characteristics. Despite their different morphology, Shuba and Shen clearly share a significant amount of common lexicon.

By contrast, Shuba has not only a relatively rich system of nominal affixation, but demonstrates reprefixing, with unproductive prefixes now incorporated into the stem. Shuba, like many other Kainji languages, has underspecified vowels in CV- prefixes which frequently show harmony with the stem vowels. The following examples show typical singular/plural pairs.

ø-/SV-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Tree (generic)	ʃə	ʃi-ʃə
Leaf	fwǎ	sə-fwǎ

ø-/a-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Moon/month	’yuuru	a-’yuuru
Sun	gwi	a-gwi

rV/a-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Field	ra-hāi	a-hāi
Seed/stone/pip	re-kero	a-kero
Mountain	ri-yam	a-yam

fV/a-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Rubbish-heap	fə-kūhū	a-kūhū
Tooth	fə-yefə	a-yefə
Farm	fu-tuma	a-tuma

sV/a-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Dew	sə-myem	a-myem
Room	su-rukwa	a-rukwa

N/a-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Water	m-mi	a-mi
Sorghum-beer	ŋ-kwa	a-kwa

do-/bV-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Person/people	do-hūmwa	bo-hūmwa
Man	do-rumburu	bu-rumburu

ø-/bV-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Child	bi	bu-bi
Chief/ruler	tɕɿfa	bə-tɕɿfa

But;

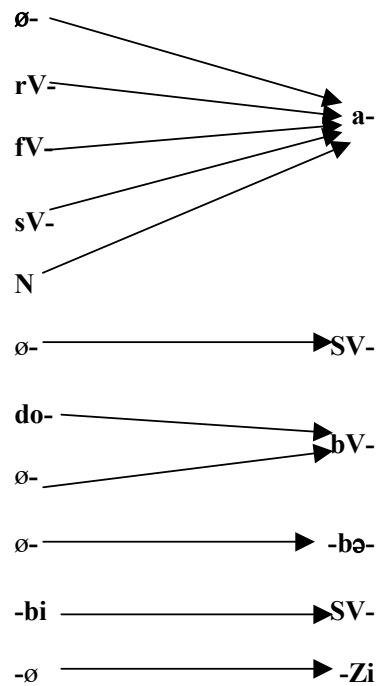
ø-/bə-

Gloss	sg.	pl.
Father	metō	mebətō
Friend	medo	mebado

The infixing of a -bə- sequence is probably a special case of ø-/bV-

This diversity suggests that many of the prefixes are innovative and only the nasal in mass nouns recalls the Class 6 prefix. Figure 2 summarises the Shuba singular/plural affix alternations:

Figure 2. Shuba noun-class affix pairings



The merger of many plural affixes to **a-** resembles the universal plural prefix **a-** in the Gbari languages (Hyman & Magaji 1970).

### 3.3 Kambari

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

The Kambari are perhaps the largest of the Kainji subgroups, numerically. 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). Table 5 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 5. The Kambari languages**

Usual Name	Other Names	One person	People	Language
<b>Kambari I</b>				
Agadi	Kakihum		aGadĩ	tsĩGadĩ
Abadi, Evadi	Ibeto		aVadĩ	tsĩVadĩ
Bangawa		vuBaangi	aBaangi	ciBaangi
	Salka	sShingíní <i>or</i> məShingíní	əShingini	ciShingini
<b>Kambari II</b>				
Agaushi	Auna, Wara		aGaushi	tsĩGaushi
Kimba			aKimba	tsikimba
Ngwunci	Agwara	maWunci	ŋWənci	tsuWənci
<b>Cicipu</b>	Acipawa	Cípù pl.	Àcípù	Cìcípù

### 3.3.2 Cicipu

Cicipu, the Western Acipa language, was formerly considered part of the Kamuku cluster, along with eastern Acipa. Dettweiler & Dettweiler (1995) present a comparative wordlist for three lects spoken in Kumbashi, Kakihum and Karisen towns. In this report they point out that ‘Western Acipa’ is so different from all the other languages in the group that it would be better to assign it to a separate branch. Stuart McGill (2007, 2009, 2010) proposed that this language has been misclassified and is in fact part of the Kambari group. Alternatively, it could have come under extremely strong influence from Kambari (not impossible since the two languages are neighbours in Kakihum). However, now that more in-depth description of the grammar and morphology of Cicipu is available, this seems less likely.

The Cicipu noun class system is very similar to the Kambari languages, and so the numbering system used by Hoffmann (1963) and Crozier (1984) for Central Kambari is followed. Table 6 lists the Cicipu noun classes and corresponding prefixes;

**Table 6. Cicipu noun class prefixes**

Class	Noun prefix	Agreement prefix	Example	Gloss
1	kA-	kA-	kà-bará kò-kǎǎ kò-jóo kè-téré kó-ǎbí	<i>elder</i> <i>egg</i> <i>lizard</i> <i>bone</i> <i>he-goat</i>
2	A-	A-	à-bará ò-kǎǎ ò-jóo è-téré	<i>elders</i> <i>eggs</i> <i>lizards</i> <i>bones</i>
3a	i-/y-	i-/y-	ì-námà yó-ǎmò rì-hyá'á	<i>meat</i> <i>monkeys</i> <i>arrow</i>
3b	ri-		rú-usì	<i>rainy season</i>
4	mA-	mA-	mà-díyá mò-tóo mò-kóotó mè-pésé	<i>hare</i> <i>chick</i> <i>kitchen hut</i> <i>twin</i>
5	N-, mi-	N-, mi-	h-díyá h-tóo m-pésé mì-nnú	<i>hares</i> <i>chicks</i> <i>twins</i> <i>birds</i>
6	ti-, tu-, ci-, cu-	ti-, tu-	tì-sí'í tù-mócì cì-lúu cù-kúlú	<i>hair</i> <i>friendship</i> <i>leopard</i> <i>tortoise</i>
7	u-/w-	u-/w-	ù-pépi wó-ǎvóo	<i>wind</i> <i>fear</i>
8	Ø-, C-, v-	Ø-, C-, v-	Ø-cìccéré c-có'ò d-dóo z-zá vó-ǎmò	<i>star</i> <i>sheep</i> <i>horse</i> <i>person</i> <i>monkey</i>
9	ku-/kw-	ku-/kw-	kù-cígà kwé-etú	<i>cockerel</i> <i>medicine</i>

Source: adapted from McGill (2009)

There appears to be no semantic unity in the noun classes and that even common Niger-Congo classes such as Class 6 for mass nouns<sup>4</sup> and 1/2 for persons are absent. If we count the number of noun classes by the prefix on the noun there are ten morphological classes. However two of these (3a and 3b) share the same agreement markers and should possibly be merged.

### 3.3.3 Cishingini (Salka Kambari)

The nominal affixing of Cishingini, the Kambari of Salka is described in Hoffman (1963) and Crozier (1984). Table 7 shows the noun class and concordial prefixes in Cishingini as summarised in Crozier (1984).

**Table 7. Noun class and concordial prefixes in Cishingini**

Class	Number	Prefix	1. Polar Tone	2. Low Tone 2	3. Low Tone 2
1	sg.	a:-	a:-	à:-	`S- à:-`S
2a		a-	a-	à-	`S- à-`S
2b	pl.	naN-			
3	sg. +/- pl.	i:-	i:-	ì:-	`S- ì:-`S
4	sg.	mV-	ma-	mà-	`S- mà-`S
5	pl.	N-	N-	̀n-	`S- ̀n-`S
6	sg. +/- pl.	tsi-	tsi-	tsì-	`S- tsì-`S
7	sg.	u:-	u:-	ù:-	`S- ù:-`S
		C-			
8a	sg. +/- pl.	vi-	C-	`C-	`S- `C-`S
		li-	vì-	vì-	`S- vî-`S
8b	sg.	0-			

The classes have not been renumbered, but the unpaired class ma- corresponds to the Niger-Congo Class 6 for mass nouns. Unlike Bantu, Cishingini classes 3 and 8a occur as both singular and plural when paired with other classes. The class pair 1/ 2a includes the majority of nouns. In contrast to Bantu, Cishingini has only three sets of concordial prefixes. The ma- and tsi- classes, containing mass nouns, language names and nouns of manner and style, correspond to the Proto-Bantu classes 6 \*ma- and 7 \*ki-. Crozier (1984) analysed noun semantics and showed that the majority of humans exhibit are associated with the affix pairs 8/2, while other animates fall into 4/5 and 8a/3. Inanimates are common in 1/2a. The mV- prefix Class 4 shows harmony between the prefix and stem vowel and corresponds to a syllabic nasal prefix, class 5. The majority of words in this class pair seem to be animals and plants.

### 3.4 The Basa cluster

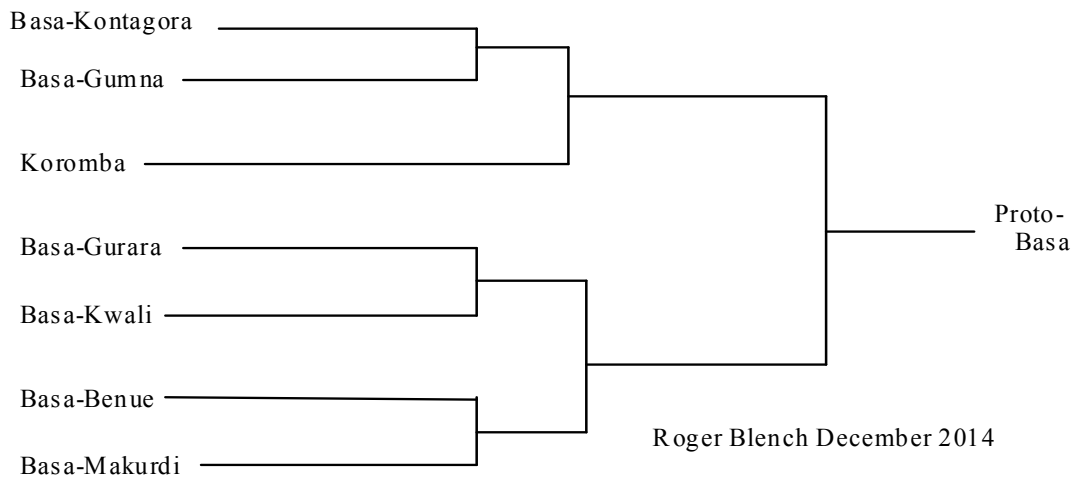
One of the early names for West Kainji was ‘Basa-Kamuku’, mainly because these were the languages for which data was accessible. However, the impression has remained that Basa and Kamuku have a privileged relationship, for which there seems to be no evidence. The Basa languages are a language cluster and probably fall into seven groups as follows;

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

Figure 3 shows the likely subgrouping of the Basa languages;

<sup>4</sup> Or else the Class 4 mV- prefix has been re-assigned.

Figure 3. The Basa languages



Fieldwork was conducted on Basa-Benue in conjunction with Paul Imoh and the late Robert Hyslop in 1984; for other languages in the cluster only wordlist data exists. Imoh (2002) is a preliminary phonology and morphology of Basa which differs somewhat from the account presented here.

Basa-Benue noun prefixes are unique among Kainji languages in having developed three-way number marking, although some traces of this exist in the Kambari cluster. As with Nilo-Saharan, the middle term or first plural applies to the item in general, or in an undefined quantity. The second plural applies to groups or clusters of the item and the singular is a singulative, i.e. it implies a unique item. So;

i-kpekpe    single chili  
o-kpokpo    chili pepper(s)  
ʃi-kpokpo    piles of chilli peppers

or;

broom    bi-fofo    i-fefe    n-fofo

The prefixes are either V- or CV-. Basa permits a large number of nominal affixes and pairings, probably the consequence of the breakdown and re-analysis of the three-way number marking. In addition, the -V in nominal affixes in Basa can affect both the C<sub>1</sub> of the stem and the stem vowels. Table 8 shows the far from transparent relationship between a singular stem -a- and -E- in the plural

Table 8. a/E vowel alternations in Basa number marking

Gloss	Singular	Middle	Plural
grass sp.	bu-baza	tu-baza	i-bɛze
horse	bu-dakwa	—	i-dekwe
hand	u-ala	—	i-ɛɛ
bow	u-ta	—	i-tɛ
dog	u-wɛwɛ	—	ʃi-wawa
termite	u-da	—	i-de
antelope sp.	bɛ-ʃɛmba	—	i-ʃimbe
tree	u-'wu'wu	—	i-'wɛ'wɛ

However, as the second set shows, there are a variety of isolated possibilities for vowel change which do not seem to be predictable. A less common alternation is o↔(w)e. The absence of phonological conditioning is shown by the following pair of words;

Gloss	Singular	Plural
chick	bi-yoyo	o-yoyo
goat	bi-yoyo	i-yweywe
and;		
rope	u-hwohwo	i-hwehwe
bicycle	i-cece	n-coco

Where the first syllable of the stem begins with either a palatal or a labial, the -V of the prefix can act both to delete the semi-vowel and sometimes cause changes in the vowel. Thus;

guinea-fowl	u-yogwu	fa-igwu
child	yé-u	myà-wó

Other examples of vowel mutation are more difficult to explain. Basa can also manifest intrusive nasals in the plural stem, a phenomenon more common in Plateau languages.

large bowl	u-gbadžo	o-gbondžo
canoe, vehicle, boat	ù-hantò	i-hentu
road	ù-hwāna	i-hwēne

The vowel in some CV- prefixes is underspecified and can change in order to harmonise with the ‘underlying’ second vowel in the noun stem. This is most marked in the case of the JV- plural prefix. The following forms are all attested;

**Table 9. Prefix and stem harmony in Basa**

Form	Example	Gloss
fa-	fa-luma	hens
fɛ-	fɛ-mbe	grasses
fɛ-	fɛ-jeze	rays
fi-	fi-lala	pestles
fo-	fo-rubo	francolins

There are no cases of fɔ- and fu- at present recorded. The fi- prefix is most common and can apparently occur with any stem vowel, synchronically. This prefix is widespread in related languages and is probably the underlying form inherited from proto-Basa.

A similar plural prefix tV- has a more limited range of variants. In this case, the tu- form is dominant and again this corresponds to a similar prefix in other languages. The exact logic of the prefix vowels remains to be understood.

Form	Example	Gloss
tɛ-	tɛ-jɛɛka	stone wedges
ti-	ti-kpeku	hills
tu-	tu-zogu	bush-melons

With a few exceptions, words that have singular prefixes beginning in m-, s-, or t- do not form plurals. These may originally have been uncountable nouns, such as liquids, but presently they seem to have no semantic unity.

### 3.5 The Kamuku group

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

The Kamuku peoples, following Gunn & Conant (1960) and Rowlands (1962) have conventionally been divided into ‘Acipa’ and ‘Ucinda’. The Acipawa, correctly the Acipu, are linguistically part of the Kambari cluster, and are treated in §3.3.. The whole Kamuku area consists of a complex of related languages, and the

scatter of lects trace their origin to the individual hills in the Mariga area. A study of Kamuku lects has added a great deal to our understanding of these languages but also added many new possible languages (Yoder et al. 2008). The two languages for which there are descriptions in some depth are Hungwəryə (Hackett & Davey 2009) and Mort (2012).

### 3.5.2 Hungwəryə [=Ngwoi]

The cəHungwəryə language [Ungwai, Ngwoi in older sources] has been described in Hackett & Davey (2009). Hungwəryə has between 13 and 17 noun class affixes which code both number and size. The feature marking of size is also reported for tHun (Bendor-Samuel et al. 1973) and its optionality may mean that it is more common than is recognised. The class marker indicates whether the referent is small, normal-sized, or large. Other features distinguish the Hungwəryə system from its neighbours, including leftwards nasal harmony of the prefixes. Where the stem vowel is nasalised, this feature spreads to the prefix vowel. The vowel has been lost in any plural prefixes and a C- prefix now abuts the stem directly, a typological change which has developed and been generalised in the Northwest Kainji languages.

Hungwəryə is characterised by extensive allomorphy of its prefixes. Table 10 shows the singular and plural class markers, re-arranged from the data in Hackett & Davey (2009). To match the mass noun affix in class 6 and the person class 1, as well as merging classes where the prefixes seem to be allomorphs, I have been obliged to re-assign their numbering.

**Table 10. Hungwəryə singular and plural class markers**

Number	Singular	Plural	Example	Gloss
1a	bu-	ə-	bú-láqásá, á-láqásá	boy
	bo-	a-	bó-mátǎ, á-mátǎ	father-in-law
1b	bʷ-	s-	bʷ-á:rǐ, s-á:rǐ	husband
1c	bi-	i-	bí-tʃítʃí, í-tʃítʃí	caterpillar
	bǐ-	ǐ-	bǐ-rǐ, ǐ-rǐ	mouse
2a	i-	mu-	í-pápi, mú-pápi	bat
	e-	mo-	é-kángàzà, mó-kángàzà	girl
	ʔǐ-	mǐ-	ʔǐ-hǐ, mǐ-hǐ	day
	j-	mʷ-	j-ǎròmà, mʷ-ǎròmà	chick
2b	i-	h-: <sup>1</sup>	í-jélà, h-é:là	tooth
3	ə-	sə-	á-gúbà, sá-gúbà	hawk
	a-	sə-	á-tābà, sá-tābà	spoon
	ə-/a-	tʃə-	á-mʷónǐ, tʃə-mʷónǐ	hemp leaf
4a	u-	hə-	ú-kʷəgǎ:, há-kʷəgǎ:	chameleon
	o-	ha-	ó-bʷombá, há-bʷombá	leaf
	ʔũ-	hǎ-	ʔũ-wǎ, hǎ-wǎ	water monitor lizard
	ʔɔ <sup>3</sup>	ha-	ʔɔ-tá, há-tá	bow
	w-	h-	w-ələmí, h-ələmí	teacher
4b	w-	s-	w-ǎròmà, s-ǎròmà	chicken
5a	ø-	sə-	-wâ:, sá-wâ:	arm
5b	ø-	i-	-bʷóná, í-bʷóná	leg
5c	ø-	ha-	-b'átɔ, há-b'átɔ	medicine
6	m-		m-ǐjǎ	water
			m-əhūtù	burning embers
			m-àrǐ	food
			m-úhúwə	smoke
			m-ónǐégwà	meat
7	tʃi-		tʃi-lǎpǎ	shirt
8a	ka-		ká-tʃǐbà	mousetrap (karaku)
	ka-		ká-tābà	medium spoon
	kə-		ká-zágí	small loud drum
8b	kə-	sə-	ká-gúbà	medium hawk
8c	ki-	mu-	kí-pápi	small bat



# Kainji nominal affixes: main text Roger Blench Circulation draft

Number	Singular	Plural	Example	Gloss
8d	ku-	hə-	kú-kʷàgâ:	large chameleon

Restructured from Davey & Hackett (2009)

In some cases, what must have been a high back vowel in the prefix has now become labialisation. Thus;

Class pair	sg.	pl.	Gloss
y-/mʷ-	y-āròmà	mʷ-āròmà	chick

Notable features are the unpaired class 7, which has few members and the prefix marking size in class 8. In other languages kV- is always a diminutive, but in Hungwəryə there appears to be a relationship between vowel quality and size. Where the -V- is back, a larger size of the referent is marked, while central vowels seem to denote small and medium referents. Table 11 presents hypothesised abstract underlying forms for the allomorphs of singular and plural prefixes.

**Table 11. Hungwəryə underlying nominal affix pairings**

Underlying	Singular allomorphs	Underlying	Plural allomorphs
A-	a-, ə-, ø-	S-	sə-, ʃə-
I-	i-, e-, ʔɛ-, y-	MU-	mu-, mo-, mɔ̃-, mʷ-
U-	u-, o-, ʔũ-, ʔɔ-, w-, ø-	hV-	hə-, ha-, hã-, h-
U-	w-	S-	s-
ø-	ø-	I-	i-
bU-	bu-, bo-	A-	ə-, a-
bU-	bʷ-	S-	s-

Nasalisation, although phonemic, is not treated as a feature of the underlying form. There is no trace of the nasal classes characteristic of Bantu and Bantoid.

## 3.5.3 The Kamuku complex

The following discussion is based on the description of Cinda in Mort (2012). Cinda noun-classes are defined by their agreement markers, shown in Table 12 but renumbered to represent allomorphy and to align the mass noun prefix with Class 6. I have entered the semantics based on lexical evidence from wordlists. The affixes are grouped according to whether they are used for singular, plural, uncountable and as derivational prefixes.

**Table 12: Cinda noun class and agreement markers**

No.	sg.	Allomorphs	No.	pl.	Allomorphs	Semantics
1	ʔA-	a-, i-, i:-	9	ʃE-	ʃe-, ʃɛ-, ʃĩ-, ʃi:-	miscellaneous but includes numerous animals
2	E-	ɛ-, ɛ:-, i-, i:-	10	mO-	mo-, mo:-, mɔ-, mu-, mu:-	miscellaneous
3	O-	o-, o:-, ɔ-, u-, u:-				plants and animals
4	bE-	bɛ-, bi-	11	E-	ɛ-, i-	plants and animals
5	bO-	bu-, bo-, bɔ-, bʷ-	12	A-	a-, a:-, ə-, i-, ø-	persons
6	mA-	ma-, mi-				mass, uncountable
7	tU-	tɛ-, tɔ-, tu-				miscellaneous but includes body parts
8a	kA-	ka-, ki-				rare
8b	kE-	kɛ-, ki-				rare
8c	kO-	kɔ-, ku-, kʷ-				rare

Class markers harmonise for height with the root or word where they are prefixed. There is possibly also an additional small class similar to class 1, containing singular nouns with ʔA- agreement markers, but with A- class markers on the noun. However, there is some variability between speakers, and even some in the same speaker. Class 6 contains non-count nouns, such as /mì-ní/ water, /mà-nébé/ oil. There is a loose semantic

basis for the grouping of noun roots into classes and genders. The gender 5/12 has the clearest semantic basis, being used almost solely for people. Classes 2, 4, 7 and 8, forming genders 2/8, 4/8 and 4/7 are loosely used for smaller nouns, however some larger nouns are also included, such as domestic animals including cows (/bè-ná/, /è-ná/ gender 4/7). Class 7, /tU-/ is a derivational prefix commonly attached to a verb, to derive a noun, and can also attach to a noun to derive another noun. The resulting noun acts as other nouns, with /tU-/ as its class marker, hence /tU-/ is included here. This class is occasionally used for uncountable nouns which have no obvious derivation from a verb or another noun, like /tègá/ *tuwo*. Classes 8a-c are rare, with only a total of 8 examples in the database. The most common of these is /kò-ɥágò/ ‘food’ which probably derives from /ɥa/ ‘to eat’.

### 3.6 The Shiroro languages

The Shiroro group consists of four languages, usually known as Rin, Fungwa, Baushi and Gurmana<sup>5</sup>. Baushi can be considered as language cluster with six members. The name proposed here is based on the proximity to Shiroro lake. The Shiroro languages have previously been treated as part of the Kamuku cluster, but there is no evidence for this and here they are treated as an independent branch of Kainji. The Rin (=Rĩ formerly Pongu) language was surveyed by Dettweiler and Dettweiler (1992) and MacDonell & Smith (2004) have circulated a phonology and grammar of Rin. For the other languages there is only wordlist data.

The Rin system of nominal prefixes is quite reduced, with a bV- singular prefix predominant, and several class pairings with a zero singular prefix. Unlike many other Kainji languages, the correspondences with Niger-Congo classes have been somewhat better preserved. Table 13 is a summary table of Rin nominal affixes, re-arranged from the data in MacDonell & Smith (2004) with a column listing the allomorphs of the singular prefixes which are reflected in different affix pairings.

**Table 13. Rin nominal affixes**

No.	Singular	Allomorphs	Plural	Semantics
1	bV-	bi-	N-	animal, object
		bi-	i-	animal
		bu-	a-	human
		Ø	a-	object
		Ø	a-	animal
		Ø	N-	animal
6	a-	a-	su-	animal
	ma-		—	mass
	ri-	ri-	a-	object
	tV-	tə-	—	mass
	u-		N-	object
			a-	object

Rin has retained the Niger-Congo Class 6 prefix for liquids and mass nouns and some trace of the persons class (1/2) although the bV- prefix marks singular and the nasal plural.

### 3.7 East Kainji

#### 3.7.1 General

The East Kainji languages are a poorly studied group of some 26 languages spoken north and west of the Jos Plateau in Central Nigeria. Compared with the branches of West Kainji, which have undergone a wide variety of morphological changes, the East Kainji languages for which data exist are comparatively similar. Shimizu (1979, 1982a,b) collected numerous short wordlists of East Kanji languages and sketched the noun-class prefix pairs that could be extracted from this material. The two languages for which detailed information on nominal prefixing exist are Map (DiLuzio 1972/3; Anderson 1980) and Boze [=Buji] (Blench BLC unpublished). Shimizu (1968) is a sketch of the noun-class system of iBunu.

<sup>5</sup> 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).

### 3.7.2 εBoze [=Buji]

The εBoze language is spoken in some seven villages west and northwest of Jos. The language has been threatened by the spread of Hausa but has recently undergone a significant revival. Boze has a rich inventory of prefixes with underspecified vowels and a variety of realisations<sup>6</sup>. Table 14 shows a summary table of the underlying affixes and their allomorphs.

**Table 14. Prefixes and their allomorphs in εBoze nouns**

No.	Singular		Plural		Semantics
	Prefix	Allomorphs	Prefix	Allomorphs	
1a	O-	ɔ-, o-, u-	a-		persons
1b	VnV-	ono-, unu-, uno-	anV-	ana-, ano-, anu-	persons
2	bV-	be-, bε-, bə-, bi-	i-		animals, people, tools
3	a-		tV-	t-, te-, tε-, ti-, tu-	miscellaneous
4	ε-, (ə-), i-		N-	n-, η-, m-	abstracts, miscellaneous
5	ø-		tV-	t-, te-, tε-, ti-, tu-	insects, reptiles
6a	ma-, m-, n-		ø-		mass nouns, abstracts
6b	ma-, m-, n-		i-		miscellaneous
7	O-	ɔ-, o-	tV-	t-, te-, tε-, ti-, tu-	objects
8	u-		ti-		plants, foods, tools
9a	rV-	re-, ri-	a-		miscellaneous
9b	rV-	re-, ri-	sV-	se-, sε-, si-	miscellaneous
10	ka-, kɔ-, ku-				diminutive
11	A-	a-, ə-	a-		prefix for verbal nouns

The table only represents common pairings, but εBoze has numerous examples of unexpected pairings, where the singular/plural gender is only represented by one or two attestations. The vowel in prefixes often harmonises with the stem, although vowels tend to be either front or back; only the allomorphs of tV- show the broad range of vowels.

EBoze shows occasional signs of a feature much more common in Plateau, the ‘intrusive nasal’. In common examples a nasal is inserted between the prefix and the stem vowel in either the singular or the plural;

ituma intúma work

The likely explanation is that n- was originally a nominalisation prefix applied to a verb stem. When the verbal noun was incorporated into the nominal system, it acquired a new prefix, without the previous one being deleted.

### 3.7.3 Map [=Amo]

The correct name for the language of the Map people is TiMap. Its noun classes are described [under the name Amo] in (DiLuzio 1972/3; Anderson 1980). Table 15 shows Anderson’s (1980: 156) summary of tiMap noun classes and concord.

<sup>6</sup> Work on εBoze has been conducted since the early 2000s in conjunction with John Nengel and the Boze Literacy Committee (BLC)

**Table 15. tiMap nominal prefixes and concord**

Class	Prefix	Map	Gloss	Concord
1	ù-	ù-là	fire	u
2	à-	à-fà	leaf	a
3	kù-	kù-fà	leaves	ku
4	tè-	tè-là	fires	te
5	lè-	lè-kpì	rat	le
6	ù-	ù-fép	breath	mi
7	kì-	kì-té	place	ki
8	nì-	nì-té	places	ni
9	fè-	fè-fù	bee	fe
10	ì-	ì-fù	bees	i
11	kà-	kà-vín	goat	ka
12	mà-	mà-ví	big goats	ma

As with other Kainji languages, tiMap has a diminutive and an augmentative. However, in striking contrast to Boze (see above) it has a very static concord system with the prefixes copying the nominal affixes directly. The underspecified vowel in Boze has been lost and tiMap prefixes are all static. Table 16 shows the tiMap nominal prefix pairings and their semantics, where these can be identified. Nasal prefixes in tiMap do not appear to be homorganic and do not change in relation to the following consonant.

**Table 16. tiMap nominal prefix pairings and semantics**

Class Pair	Prefix	Semantics
1/2	ù-/ à-	mostly humans
1/4	ù-/ tè-	unclear
3/2	kù-/ à-	unclear
5/2	tè-/ à-	body parts and diverse
5/4	lè-/ tè-	diverse
6/4	ù-/ tè-	mass nouns
7/8	kì-/ nì-	diverse
9/10	fè-/ ì-	animals, crops and diverse
11/8	kà-/ nì-	domestic animals and diverse
1a	ù-	uncountable
2a	à-	uncountable
4a	tè-	uncountable
6a	ù-	uncountable

TiMap has four uncountable or mass noun prefixes, one of which can be mapped against the Niger-Congo Class 6 prefix. The class pair 1/2 for humans in tiMap is evidently cognate with èBoze but segmental cognates are otherwise difficult to discern.

### 3.8 Northwest Kainji

Lela (as Dakarkari) is often used as a cover-term for the peoples of the region between Rijau and Donko, in reference books such as Gunn and Conant (1960). This is now generally rejected, and it is here proposed to adopt the term ‘Northwest Kainji’ to cover this branch, which consists of the cLela, Hun-Saare, Kag cluster and Wurə-Gwamhyə-Mba languages. The group is unified by a striking morphological feature, the reduction of nominal prefixes to single consonants. A consequence of this is the loss of harmony between prefix and stem vowels. Nominal affixing in the Northwest Kainji languages is relatively well-described with analyses for cLela (Dettweiler ined., Hun-Saare (Bendor-Samuel *et al.* 1973) and Ut-Ma’in (Patterson 2012). A particular feature of this group is affix copying (first noted in Hoffmann 1967) which results in suffixes in some classes.

#### 3.8.1 cLela (Dakarkari)

CLela has ten noun classes marked by six consonant prefixes [c-, d-, k-, m-, s-, v-]; three vowel prefixes [a-, i-, u-]; and a common noun [-n] suffix (Hoffmann 1967; Dettweiler ined.). Number is marked on inanimate

nouns with prefixes; while in animates plurality is indicated by an -nV suffix. Table 17 summarises the cLela noun class affixes;

**Table 17. cLela noun class affixes**

No.	Singular prefix (Inanimate)	Plural Prefix (Inanimate)	Plural suffix (Animate)
1	a-	-	-
2		c-	-
3	u-	-	-
4	d-	-	-
5	k-	-	-
6	v-	-	-
7		s-	-
8	i-		-
9	m-	m-	-
10	ø-	-	-nV-

Source: Dettweiler ined.

A published dictionary of cLela provides a broad variety of examples of noun-class pairings (Rikoto et al. 2001). The singular and plural affixes are exemplified below in Table 18;

**Table 18. cLela noun class affix pairings**

Class	Singular	Gloss	Class	Plural	Gloss
1	a-cù	face	2	c-cù	faces
3	u-bèlà	farm	2	c-bela	farms
4	d-isá	eye	2	c-isá	eyes
5	k-wècé	cloud	2	c-wècé	clouds
6	v-hwèn	rope	7	s-hwèn	ropes
8	i-hònò	calabash	9	m-hònò	calabashes
9	m-hò	water			
10	nàamá	cow	10	nàam.ná	cows

The persons class ø-/nV is related to the forms in the neighbouring tHun language but is innovative within Kainji. Only the mass noun prefix m- corresponds to Niger-Congo 6.

### 3.8.2 Hun-Saare (Duka)

The Hun-Saare people live directly south of the Lela, between Niger and Kebbi States. They 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 1993a). They are first mentioned by Temple (1922:96-100). The noun-phrase is described in Bendor-Samuel *et al.* (1973). An electronic dictionary and grammar of tHun (Dukawa) is available, associated with the translation project (Heath p.c. a,b).

The presentation of Hun-Saare nominal affixing is far from transparent and is moreover, given in orthographic representations. The class marker can move from before to after the noun root. When the marker is before the noun it is the object of the verb and when it follows, the noun is the subject. Table 19 shows the system of tHun nominal affixes and concord, based on Heath (p.c.). Note that Bendor-Samuel *et al.* (1973) give a somewhat different presentation.

**Table 19. tHun nominal affixes and concord**

Singular			Plural			Semantics
No.	Affix	Pronoun	No.	Affix	Pronoun	
1	o-	wə	6	-nɛ	ɛ	persons
2	-ər-	ɔ	7	-ɛgɛ-, -ɛ-	yɔ	miscellaneous
3	-m-	yɔ	8	-ət-	sɛ	miscellaneous
4	ø-	dɛ	9	-ər-	rɔ	miscellaneous
5	ø-	mɔ	10	-m-	mɔ	mass, uncountable

Source: Heath (p.c.)

As with cLela, a class pair marking persons and a mass noun affix can be discerned, but otherwise, tHun shows few cognates other systems.

### 3.8.3 The Kag (Ut-Ma'in or Fakai) cluster

The first mention of the languages of the Kag cluster is Temple (1922:89) who refers to 'Kelinchi' [ʔ = Kelanci, i.e. Ker-ni]. Rowlands (1962) gives short lists of nouns in 'Fakawa', Kelawa and Zusu. Regnier (2003) conducted a sociolinguistic survey among five of the eight named Fakai cluster members in 1991-1992. Paterson (2012) represents new in-depth fieldwork on the Ror language, now named *ut-Ma'in* by its speakers. Table 20 shows the peoples and languages of this cluster;

**Table 20. Peoples and Languages of the Kag Cluster**

Hausa Name	People	Language
Fakkawa	Kag-ne	ət-Kag
Fakkawa	əs-Us	ət-Us
Gelawa	a-Jiir	ət-Jiir
Zuksun	a-Zuksun	ət-Zuksun
Kukumawa	əs-Fer	ət-Fer
Kelawa	Kər-ni	ət-Kər
Tuduwa	aor	ət-maor
Kuluwa	a-Koor	ət-ma-Koor

There are thirteen noun classes in *ut-Ma'in*. Three classes share the same *ū-* prefix, but their distinct concords suggest class merger. Four classes have a null *ø-* prefix, but with similarly diverse agreement morphemes. Table 21 shows the nominal affixes, following Paterson (2012). I have added Class 2b, which is the *-nɛ* plural suffix marking some persons, cognate with similar *nV-* suffixes in cLela and tHun. The first column gives a class affix number, corresponding to Bantu where possible. For the diminutive and augmentative classes of *Ut-Ma'in* the labels DIM and AUG are used. The second column shows the nominal prefix and the third column represents the agreement targets, indicated by the object pronoun. The last two columns give sample lexemes from each class.

**Table 21. Ut-Ma'in noun classes**

Class	Prefix	Object Pronoun	Ut-Ma'in	Gloss
1a	ū-	ú/wá	ū-mákt ū-rāg	barren woman stupid person
1b	ø-	wá	ø-hámèt ø-z <sup>w</sup> àr	visitor young man
2a	ø-	é	ø-ná ø-h <sup>ɪ</sup> ɓ ø-règèr	oxen, bovines guinea corn (pl) stars
2b	ø-	-nɛ	ø-nétnè	people
3a	ū-	ó	ū-bù ū-k <sup>h</sup> óm	house arm
3b	ø-	ó	ū-sēp ø-bòʔ	song dream

Table 21. Ut-Ma'in noun classes

			ø-dʒāb	heart
			ø-s <sup>w</sup> ás	fish trap
4	ēs-	sé	ēs-bòʔ	dreams
			ēs-rā	muscle
			ēs-bà:t	medicine
5	ēr-	dé	ēr-kók	calabash
			ēr-dʒāb	liver
			ēr-hí	head
6a	ēt-	tó	ēt-kók	calabashes
			ēt-is	eyes
			ēt-rīn	charcoal
6b	ēm-	mó	ēm-nò:g	oil
			ēm-híʒ	blood
			ēm-híʒrèg	sand
7a	ū-	já	ū-ná	bovine
			ū-ʈʃān	feather
			ū-nín	tooth
7b	ø-	já	ø-tʃāmpá	man
			ø-mārimárí	the dead
			ø-r'ām	cripple (n)
AUG	ā-	á	ā-kók	huge calabashes
			ā-bà	big lake
DIM	ī-	é	ī-kók	tiny calabash
			ī-g <sup>w</sup> á	tiny (piece of) grass
			ī-rándí	thread

Source: Paterson (2012)

As elsewhere in the group, the 1/2 class pairing marks persons and the əm- prefix marks uncountable nouns.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Kainji languages demonstrate clear evidence for a system of noun classes defined by nominal affixing and alliterative concord. However, the potential to reconstruct a proto-system is limited by the sparsity or absence of descriptions for many subgroups. Beyond that, however, the affix systems seem to show remarkable diversity, with only limited correspondences between branches. The observations of McGill (2009) on the noun-class system of Cicipu could apply to much of Kainji;

It will be clear to anyone familiar with the Benue-Congo or Bantu literature that, superficially at least, the Cicipu system is very different to both the suggested Proto-Benue-Congo (PBC) reconstructions (e.g. De Wolf 1971) and the present-day Bantu systems. There are fewer classes, and the forms of the original PBC prefixes have in some cases changed beyond recognition. Nevertheless, there are also striking similarities, in particular the robust and ubiquitous alliterative agreement ... Much the same could be said about the other Kainji languages for which we have data – the prefixes and class pairings are much changed from PBC, but the mechanics of the agreement system have been retained.

The systems have eroded and been renewed in a variety of ways in different subgroups, and in particular some languages seem to have evolved highly divergent ‘new’ prefixes. One of the distinctive features of Kainji languages is the apparently random way singular and plural affixes shift their number marking. Thus Reshe has a Bantu-like u-/bu- (1/2) person marking affix pairing. Shuba has bV- marking plural persons but the singular prefix is the unfamiliar do-. In Hungwəryə the singular class marker for persons is bu- now paired with a plural ə-. A preliminary hypothesis to explain this would be that the three-way number marking found in Basa languages was formerly more widespread, and as the classes collapsed innovative class pairings resulted.

The following generalisations about proto-Kainji seem to be supported by the data.

### **Kainji nominal affixes: main text Roger Blench Circulation draft**

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- a) Proto-Kainji had a rich system of nominal prefixes and alliterative concord. It is possible the affixing originally showed a three-way distinction, still attested in Basa
- b) Proto-Kainji had the bilabial unpaired affix mV- for liquids and other mass nouns attested widely in Niger-Congo and usually assigned to Class 6.
- c) Proto-Kainji had a class pair for persons, perhaps u-/ba- which can be treated as cognate with Bantu 1/2.
- d) Proto-Kainji had underspecified vowels for a kV- nominal prefix and possibly also tV- and SV-, whereby the V shows harmony with the stem vowel.
- e) Proto-Kainji had a diminutive (and perhaps augmentative) affix marker kV- (also found in some Plateau languages) which has become homophonous with a separate kV- marker.
- f) Proto-Kainji allowed prefix swapping to indicate characteristics of the noun, marking qualities such as length or personhood.
- g) If Proto-Kainji had a homorganic plural nasal prefix, the evidence is now hard to discern, since it is only clearly attested in some East Kainji and Kambari cluster languages.

Once languages where the affixes are eroded are discounted, there remains the problem of whether Reshe can be said to be part of the system. There are almost no correspondences between the Reshe system and the other branches described here, suggesting it is a renewed system of unknown origin. Understanding Kainji should be a priority goal in the light of its importance in the reconstruction of Proto-Benue-Congo, but this will require a great deal more data collection and analysis.



**Appendix 1. Data sources for the Kainji Languages**

Table 22 shows the principal unpublished data sources for the Kainji languages.

**Table 22. Unpublished sources for Kainji Languages**

Branch	Subgroup	Language	Sources
Reshe		Reshe	Harris, mss., Agamalafiya, Blench, Dettweilers
Lake	Rerang Laru	Rop Shuba Shen	Meek, Blench, McGill Blench, McGill Meek, Sterk, Blench, McGill
Northwest	Lela  Hun  Gwamhi  ut-Ma'in       ?	cLela Zuru cLela Ribah tHun sSaare Gwamhyə Wurə Mba Kag Fer Jiir Kər Koor Ror Us Zuksun Damakawa	Hoffmann, Rikoto, Dettweilers, Regnier, Blench Blench Skitch & Cressman, Regnier, Dettweilers, Heath Regnier, Dettweilers, Blench Regnier, Rowlands, Blench, McGill Regnier, Blench, McGill Blench, McGill Blench, Regnier Regnier Regnier Regnier None Smith, Regnier Regnier Rowlands McGill
Basa		Basa Kontagora Basa-Gumna Kərɔmba Basa-Gurara Basa-Benue Basa-Makurdi	Rowlands, Blench Blench Blench Sterk Blench Blench
Kamuku		Shama Rogo-Shyabe Səgəɲuk Cinda Regi Kuki Zubazuba Kagare Hungwəryə	Regnier, Yoder et al., McGill Regnier, Yoder et al., Blench, McGill Regnier Regnier, Blench, Mort, Yoder et al. Regnier, Omanor, Yoder et al. Regnier, Blench, Yoder et al. Yoder et al., Blench, McGill Yoder et al. Davey
Shiroro	    Baushi	Fungwa Rin Wəgə Gurmana Ndəkə Hipina Rubu Miin	Blench, McGill Rowlands, Regnier, Dettweilers, Blench, MacDonell & Smith Blench, McGill Johnston, Blench, McGill Regnier McGill None Gimba, Blench

Branch	Subgroup	Language	Sources
East		Samburu	None
		Wáyã	Dettweiler
		Gbiri	Wenger
		Boze	Blench
		Sheni	Blench
Kambari		Moro	Blench
		CiShingini	Hoffmann, Crozier, Stark et al.
		Tsɪvadi	Lovelace, Blench
		Baangi	Blench
		Tsikimba	Blench, Stark et al.
		Agwara	Mierau, Stark et al.
		Cicipu	McGill, Dettweilers

Figure 4 shows the languages and internal structure of East Kainji as far as can be gauged from existing data.

**Figure 4. The internal structure of East Kainji**

- A. Southern
  - Piti
  - Atsam
- B. Jos group
  - Northern
    - Ningi cluster
      - Kudu-Camo (almost extinct)
      - Gamo-Ningi (Butu-Ningi†)
    - Lame cluster
      - Gyem (almost extinct)
      - Shau (almost extinct)
    - Lere cluster
      - Si (almost extinct)
      - Gana (almost extinct)
      - Takaya (almost extinct)
    - North-central cluster
      - Izora (=Cokobo)
      - Lemoro
      - Sanga
      - Janji
      - εBoze (=Buji) -iGusu -iZeLe(=Jere) -iBunu(=Ribina) -iPanawa-iLoro
      - Iguta
      - Tunzu (=Duguza)
      - tiMap
    - Sheni cluster
      - Ziriya (extinct)
      - Kere (extinct)
      - Sheni (almost extinct)
  - Kauru
    - Gbiri-Niragu
    - Shuwa-Zamani
    - Surubu
    - Kurama
    - Malauma
    - Bina
    - Kono

Kaivi  
Vono  
Tumi  
Kinuku  
Dungu

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