Niger-Congo languages

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Introduction

Niger-Congo languages dominate Sub-Saharan Africa, and the family constitutes one of the world's largest referential language groups, with around 1500 languages. The precise composition of Niger-Congo is not settled. A less controversial "core" of the family consists of the subgroups of Atlantic, Gur, Adamawa, Kru, Kwa, Benue-Congo, and Kordofanian, running roughly from the northwest of Sub-Saharan Africa eastward. The Benue-Congo group includes the well-studied Bantu languages, which dominate the southern part of Sub-Saharan Africa and have had an especially prominent role in Niger-Congo studies. Other groups classified more controversially as Niger-Congo are Mande, Ijoid, and Dogon. Here, materials on all of these groups are considered. The morphosyntactic typology of Niger-Congo languages is quite diverse with morphologically rich, agglutinating languages found in its northwest and southern regions, in Atlantic and Bantu respectively, and isolating languages found roughly in its central area in groups spoken around the northern Gulf of Guinea and points inland. The strongest evidence for a genealogical relationship among Niger-Congo langauges is the existence of a distinctive system of nominal gender, and the largest gender systems in the world are found in the family. Points of resemblance among Niger-Congo languages were already noted in the early twentieth century by scholars like Diedrich Westermann, and the codification of the family as understood today was established in the middle of the twentieth century by Joseph Greenberg. Niger-Congo's dominance of the African continent means that many "African" grammatical features are also Niger-Congo features, and a full understanding of African language typology and history requires good knowledge of the group. This bibliography focuses on comparative work on the family as a whole as well as its subgroups, with more limited consideration of work on the typology and history of the languages of the family. The way that the family is divided into subgroups here is based on the most common conventions used by specialists at the present time. Existing tree-based classifications often make use of additional subgroup names, reflecting various proposed stages of the family's development, but, on the whole, most of these are of less general currency than lower-level labels.

General overviews and textbooks

While now somewhat dated, the most comprehensive overview of Niger-Congo is the edited collection of Bendor-Samuel 1989, which contains twenty-two chapters on the major branches of Niger-Congo as understood at that time. Within that volume, Williamson 1989b remains a particularly important overview of the comparative linguistics of the family as a whole. The older edited collection of Sebeok 1971, while not specifically focused on Niger-Congo, contains a number of articles on Niger-Congo subgroups that remain useful today. Williamson & Blench 2000 is a concise overview of the family, and Dimmendaal & Storch 2016 provides more recent discus-

sion, including an emphasis on the earliest work of the family and topics of typological interest. General references on the languages of Africa such as Welmers 1973, Childs 2003, and Dimmendaal 2011 also provide useful overviews of the family. Creissels 1991 and Creissels 1994 are introductions to the morphosyntax and phonology of African languages that include extensive data from Niger-Congo languages. While Niger-Congo is the current dominant label for the group, some sources, such as Welmers 1973, instead use the label Niger-Kordofanian. Discussion of key references for African languages in general, including Niger-Congo languages, can be found in Oxford Bibliographies articles *Languages of Africa[obo-9780199772810-0092]* and *African Linguistics[obo-9780199772810-0088]*.

Bendor-Samuel, John (ed.). 1989. *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

An edited volume covering all of the major branches of Niger-Congo as the family was understood at the time. While now somewhat dated, it remains an indispensable resource, and chapters on certain subgroups still serve as the most up-to-date overview references.

Childs, G. Tucker. 2003. *An introduction to African languages*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

This textbook is a general introduction to African languages and contains an accessible overview of the Niger-Congo family as well as information on specific Niger-Congo languages.

Creissels, Denis. 1991. *Description des langues négro-africaines et théorie syntaxique*. Grenoble: ELLUG.

This is a general textbook on morphology and syntax in African languages including extensive data on Niger-Congo languages.

Creissels, Denis. 1994. *Aperçu sur les structures phonologiques des langues négro-africaines*. Grenoble: ELLUG.

This is a general textbook on the phonology of African languages including extensive data on Niger-Congo languages.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 2011. *Historical linguistics and the comparative study of African languages*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

This monograph is designed as a course book on the historical and comparative study of African languages. It contains a useful overview of the comparative linguistics of the Niger-Congo family and also considers numerous phenomena involving specific Niger-Congo languages.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. & Anne Storch. 2016. Niger-Congo: A brief state of the art. In *Oxford Handbooks Online: Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.

This is a recent encyclopedia article providing an overview of the comparative linguistics and grammar of the Niger-Congo languages.

Sebeok, Thomas A. (ed.). 1971. *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*. The Hague: Mouton.

This classic reference work on the languages of Africa contains a number of articles specific to Niger-Congo languages. It remains useful and served as a foundational text for many later works.

Welmers, William E. 1973. *African language structures*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

A classic textbook on African languages, which is still of value today. It includes discussion of comparative Niger-Congo and most of the illustrative data is drawn from Niger-Congo languages. The family is referred to under the name Niger-Kordofanian in this book.

Williamson, Kay. 1989b. Niger-Congo overview. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 3–45. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Though somewhat dated, this chapter remains a useful overview of the comparative linguistics and grammatical features of Niger-Congo languages. Of particular value is its presentation of comparative data on the forms of noun class markers in Niger-Congo subgroups.

Williamson, Kay & Roger M. Blench. 2000. Niger-Congo. In Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.), *African languages: An introduction*, 11–42. Cambridge: CUP.

An overview chapter of the comparative linguistics of Niger-Congo containing discussion of the family as a whole and concise overviews of major subgroups.

Historically important works

While they have been superseded as entry points to Niger-Congo by more recent publications, a number of works on Niger-Congo languages stand out for their historical importance and are worth consulting by those interested in the development of Niger-Congo scholarship. These include Koelle 1854, Bleek 1869, Meinhof 1899, Westermann 1927, Guthrie 1967–1971, and Greenberg 1963.

Bleek, W. H. I. 1869. *A comparative grammar of South African languages. Part II: The concord; section I: The noun*. London: Trübner & Co.

Bleek's work is credited as the first to recognize the Bantu language family, which belongs to Niger-Congo, and, therefore, represents an important first step towards comparative Niger-Congo linguistics. He is also credited with coining the term Bantu.

Greenberg, Joseph H. 1963. *The languages of Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

This work developed what has become to be known as the "standard" classification of African languages, grouping them into four families, including Niger-Congo. It also contains an influential proposal regarding the subgrouping of Niger-Congo.

Guthrie, Malcolm. 1967–1971. *Comparative Bantu: An introduction to the comparative linguistics and prehistory of the Bantu languages* (four volumes). Farnborough: Gregg.

A classic reference work on the comparative linguistics of the Bantu languages, the most well-known language group within Niger-Congo, including an extensive collection of vocabularies and Proto-Bantu reconstructions.

Koelle, Sigismund Wilhelm. 1854. *Polyglotta Africana: Or a comparative vocabulary of nearly three hundred words and phrases, in more than one hundred distinct African languages*. London: Church Missionary House. (Reprinted 1963 Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria.).

A collection of around three hundred wordlists collected from refugees of slavery living in Freetown, Sierra Leone. These comprise some of the oldest available records on many Niger-Congo languages.

Meinhof, Carl. 1899. *Grundriss einer Lautlehre der Bantusprachen nebst einer Anleitung zur Aufnahme der Bantusprachen*. Leipzig/Berlin: Brockhaus.

This work on Bantu languages is widely credited as the first instance of the comparative method being applied to any African language group.

Westermann, Diedrich. 1927. *Die westlichen Sudansprachen und ihre Beziehungen zum Bantu*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

This work is generally cited as the first to propose the existence of a language group that can be associated with the family now recognized as Niger-Congo. Unlike modern classifications, however, this group did not include the Bantu languages.

Comparative work and classification

Texbooks such as Childs 2003 and Dimmendaal 2011, as well as overview chapters such as Williamson & Blench 2000 and Dimmendaal & Storch 2016, discussed in *General overviews and textbooks*, provide good overviews of proposed and accepted classification schemes for Niger-Congo languages. The works below are more technical in nature, focusing on the reconstruction of specific significant features of Niger-Congo grammar, as in Voeltz 1977, Miehe 1991, Hyman 2007, Babaev 2013, and Nurse et al. 2016, or considering detailed aspects of the subgrouping of the family, as in Bennett & Sterk 1977, Stewart 2002, and Olson 2006.

Babaev, Kirill V. 2013. Нигеро-конголезский праязык: Личные местоимения *[Proto–Niger-Congo: Personal pronouns]*. Moscow: LRC Publishing House.

This monograph focuses on the reconstruction of person marking in Niger-Congo. While the fact that that the work is in Russian may make it less accessible to many readers, the reference list largely refers to works in English and French and is a valuable resource in its own right.

Bennett, Patrick R. & Jan P. Sterk. 1977. South Central Niger-Congo: A reclassification. *Studies in African linguistics* 8. 241–273.

This is an influential study of the internal subgrouping of Niger-Congo. The conclusions were largely based on lexicostatistical evidence, but other factors were also considered.

Hyman, Larry M. 2007. Niger-Congo verb extensions: Overview and discussion. In Doris L. Payne & Jaime Peña (eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, 149–163. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla.

This paper contains a concise overview of suffixes known as verb extensions in Niger-Congo languages, which modify the semantics of the verbs that they attach to. Along with noun class markers, these have long been seen as good candidates for morphological reconstruction to proto–Niger-Congo.

Kießling, Roland. 2013. On the origin of Niger-Congo nominal classification. In Ritsuko Kikusawa & Lawrence A. Reid (eds.), *Historical Linguistics 2011: Selected papers from the twentieth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Osaka, 25–30 July 2011*, 43–65. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

This paper considers the question of the origin of Niger-Congo noun class markers by looking at classifier constructions found in languages of the family. Among other things, it provides a useful, succinct overview of the properties typically associated with Niger-Congo noun class systems.

Miehe, Gudrun. 1991. *Die Präfixnasale im Benue-Congo und Kwa: Versuch einer Widerlegung der Hypothese von der Nasalinnovation des Bantu*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

This monograph constitutes an examination of the distribution of so-called nasal prefixes in the Benue-Congo and Kwa subgroups of Niger-Congo. These are of comparative interest since their distribution had once been proposed as a historically significant isogloss within the family.

Mukarovsky, Hans. 1977. *A study of Western Nigritic* (two volumes). Vienna: Institut für Ägyptologie und Afrikanistik der Universität Wien.

These two volumes comprise an extensive lexical comparative study of languages from a number of branches of Niger-Congo, including Atlantic, Gur, and Kwa, as well as consideration of Proto-Bantu forms. It remains useful both as a collection of information and references on Niger-Congo languages and for its extensive discussion in English of the comparative work of Diedrich Westermann that was published in German.

Nurse, Derek, Sarah Rose & John Hewson. 2016. *Tense and aspect in Niger-Congo*. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa. http://www.africamuseum.be/museum/research/publications/rmca/online/tense.pdf.

This work is a comparative study of tense and aspect encoding in Niger-Congo languages. It is based on an examination of the tense-aspect systems of a sample of around twenty Niger-Congo languages.

Olson, Kenneth S. 2006. On Niger-Congo classification. In Howard I. Aronson, Donald L. Dyer, Victor A. Friedman, Daniela S. Hristova & Jerrold M. Sadock (eds.), *The Bill question: Contribu-*

tions to the study of linguistics and languages in honor of Bill J. Darden on the occasion of his sixty-sixth birthday, 153–190. Bloomington, IN: Slavica.

This paper contains a useful overview of the history of investigation into the internal subgrouping of Niger-Congo, with a particular focus on the evidence used to support the proposals that have been made.

Stewart, John M. 2002. The potential of Proto-Potou-Akanic-Bantu as a pilot Proto-Niger-Congo, and the reconstructions updated. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 23. 197–224.

This work provide examples of the author's attempts at the the reconstruction of Niger-Congo through strict application of the comparative method, which otherwise has not been generally employed in reconstruction at high levels of the family.

Voeltz, F. K. Erhard. 1977. *Proto Niger-Congo verb extensions*. Los Angeles: UCLA PhD dissertation.

This is a study of suffixes known as verb extensions in Niger-Congo including proposed reconstructions. Along with noun class markers, these have long been seen as good candidates for morphological reconstruction to proto–Niger-Congo.

Major subgroups

Niger-Congo is conventionally divided into a number of high-level subgroups. There is not consensus as to which of these subgroups properly belong within a genealogical unit associated with Niger-Congo and which may be better treated as isolate families. Moreover, some of these subgroups are more secure as genealogical units than others. Here, all major groups that have been considered part of Niger-Congo are considered, with an emphasis on work that is relevant for understanding the comparative grammar of the languages associated with the relevant subgroup or which is significant for establishing the relatedness of languages (or lack thereof) in the subgroup as well as connections to other major Niger-Congo subgroups. There is presently widespread consensus on the inclusion of languages of the subgroups of Atlantic, Gur, Adamawa, Kru, Kwa, Benue-Congo, and Kordofanian in Niger-Congo, though there is not necessarily consensus that these are coherent genealogical units in their own right. Mande, Ijoid, Dogon, and Ubangian are also often treated as belonging to Niger-Congo, but there is less consensus that they are related to the other Niger-Congo languages. They are also not considered to be closely related to each other, which would otherwise make them isolate families. Scholarly coverage of the subgroups shows considerable variation, and a number of them are in need of much greater study before questions of their genealogical affiliation can be properly answered. Below, each of the major subgroups is presented in alphabetical order.

Adamawa

The Adamawa languages are one of the least studied of the conventional subgroups of Niger-Congo. Their geographic distribution ranges from northeastern Nigeria, through adjacent parts

of Cameroon, and into southern Chad and nearby parts of the Central African Republic. While the membership of the languages classified within Adamawa as part of Niger-Congo is generally accepted, their status as a true genealogical unit has yet to be established, and some work suggests that connections between some languages classified as Adamawa and languages classified as Gur. Greenberg 1963 proposed that Adamawa languages form a close connection with what are today generally referred to as Ubangian languages, further discussed in *Ubangian*, using the name Adamawa-Eastern, which is found in various older publications. Samarin 1971 and Boyd 1989 provide overviews of Adamawa and Ubangi, and Boyd 1988 discusses Adamawa specifically. Bennett 1983 presents a lexicostatistical study of Adamawa and Ubangian. Boyd 1974, Elders 2006, Jungraithmayr 1969, Kleinewillinghöfer 1996a, and Kleinewillinghöfer 1996b are significant comparative studies of different sets of Adamawa languages. The online resource of Kleinewillinghöfer 2014 is a good entry point to the group.

Bennett, Patrick R. 1983. Adamawa-Eastern: Problems and prospects. In Ivan R. Dihoff (ed.), *Current approaches to African linguistics, volume 1*, 23–48. Dordrecht: Foris.

This is a lexicostatistical-based examination of the Adamawa and Ubangian languages, labeled Adamawa-Eastern in this work. The paper does not find clear evidence for genealogical validity of the larger group or either of the high-level subgroups of Adamawa and Ubangian, though various smaller groups emerged from the study.

Boyd, Raymond. 1974. *Étude comparative dans le groupe Adamawa*. Paris: SELAF.

This work is a comparative study focusing on wordlists of a relatively large sample of Adamawa languages and considering sound correspondences among them.

Boyd, Raymond. 1988. Les langues Adamawa. In Daniel Barreteau & Henri Tourneux (eds.), *Le milieu et les hommes: Recherches comparatives et historiques dans le bassin du Lac Tchad*, 231–239. Paris: ORSTOM.

This chapter considers the external relations and internal structure of the Adamawa group, including considerations of connections between Adamawa and Gur. It includes comparative lexical data representing various Adamawa languages along with some indication of possible Gur correspondences.

Boyd, Raymond. 1989. Adamawa-Ubangi. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 178–215. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This is an overview chapter on the composition, internal classification and grammatical features of the Adamawa and Ubangian groups. While now somewhat dated, it remains the most useful introductory overview of the two groups.

Elders, Stefan. 2006. Issues in comparative Kebi-Benue (Adamawa). *Africana Linguistica* 12. 37–88.

This article is focused on the Kebi-Benue subgroup of Adamawa. Its introductory pages contain a useful, concise overview of the overall comparative situation of the Adamawa and Ubangian groups.

Jungraithmayr, Herrmann. 1969. Class languages of the Tangale-Waja District (Bauchi Province, northern Nigeria). *Afrika und Übersee* 52. 161–206.

This is a comparative study of a number of Adamawa languages and is credited as being the first work to suggest connections between the Adamawa and Gur groups.

Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. 1996a. Die nordwestlichen Adamawa-Sprachen: Eine Übersicht. In Uwe Siebert (ed.), *Afrikanische Sprachen zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Beiträge zur Dokumentation, Klassifikation und Rekonstruktion*, 80–103. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This study examines Adamawa languages found in the northwestern portion of the family's distribution primarily through the presentation of vocabulary.

Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. 1996b. Relationship between Adamawa and Gur languages: The case of Waja and Tula. *Cahiers Voltaïques/Gur Papers* 1. 25–45.

This paper examines the question of the connections between Adamawa languages and Gur languages through the detailed consideration of two Adamawa languages, Waja and Tula. It also contains useful overview discussion of significant issues in the study of comparative Adamawa.

Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. 2014. Adamawa language groups. https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-adamawa/adamawa-languages/.

This website provides a useful overview of the composition of the entire Adamawa group, including dedicated pages to some of its subgroups. References are included, making this is a good resource for initial investigation.

Samarin, William J. 1971. Adamawa-Eastern. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 213–244. The Hague: Mouton.

This is an overview of what was known about Adamawa and Ubangian languages at the time of publication. As in other works of the period, these two subgroups are treated together as a group under the heading of Adamawa-Eastern following Greenberg 1963.

Atlantic

The Atlantic languages are mostly found at the northwestern periphery of the Niger-Congo area, and of Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. They are considered to be relatively uncontroversial members of Niger-Congo, largely due to the widespread presence of noun classes systems of the Niger-Congo type in the group. The name West Atlantic has also been used for this group, as found, for instance, in the important survey article of Sapir 1971. Atlantic's validity as a proper genealogical unit is not widely accepted, however. North Atlantic is an important, widely accepted genealogical subgroup of Atlantic that includes Wolof, Sereer, and Fula languages. Fula languages show the largest noun class systems within Niger-Congo, as evidenced by descriptions like Breedveld 1995. There are also groups like Mel that have been placed into Atlantic despite the lack of convincing evidence of close connections to other Atlantic languages, as discussed, for

instance, in Dalby 1965. Sapir 1971 and Wilson 1989 provide an overview of the Atlantic family. Doneux 1975 is an important comparative work, as is Wilson 2007, which, despite its relatively recent publication date is based on work that was done much earlier. While not narrowly comparative in focus, Doneux 1991 contains significant comparative discussion. An important recent comparative collection on Atlantic is Creissels & Pozdniakov 2015, a survey of noun classes in the group which includes Pozdniakov 2015, an updated discussion of the reconstruction of Atlantic noun classes and Creissels 2015, a consideration of the typology of noun class systems in Atlantic languages.

Breedveld, J. O. 1995. *Form and meaning in Fulfulde: A morphophonological study of Maasinankoore*. Leiden: Research School CNWS.

This work presents a detailed analyses of a number aspects of the grammar of a Fula language, with an emphasis on the semantics of noun class markers. This makes it a good reference for those interested in learning more about semantic patterns in Niger-Congo noun classes, an area that has not traditionally been a major focus of comparative work.

Creissels, Denis. 2015. Typologie des classes nominales dans les langues atlantiques. In Denis Creissels & Konstantin Pozdniakov (eds.), *Les classes nominales dans les langues atlantiques*, 7–55. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This article contains overview discussion of Niger-Congo noun class systems and focuses on their typological properties in Atlantic languages. This makes it useful as a first reference for learning about noun class systems in the group

Creissels, Denis & Konstantin Pozdniakov (eds.). 2015. *Les classes nominales dans les langues atlantiques*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This edited volume contains Creissels 2015, an overview of the typology of Atlantic noun class systems, and Pozdniakov 2015, an up-to-date discussion of the reconstruction of the Proto-Atlantic noun class system, as well as more than a dozen chapters offering descriptions of the noun classes of specific Atlantic languages.

Dalby, David. 1965. The Mel languages: A reclassification of southern "West Atlantic". *African Language Studies* 6. 1–17.

This paper provides an overview of problems related to the idea that Atlantic constitutes a true genealogical unit while also looking at evidence for the close relationship among some "Atlantic" languages.

Doneux, J. L. 1975. Hypothèses pour la comparative des langues atlantiques. *Africana Linguistica* 6. 41–129.

This work represents a comparative study of Atlantic, including proposed reconstructions of various features of Proto-Atlantic. Some of its reconstructions propose possible links to other Niger-Congo languages.

Doneux, J. L. 1991. *La place de la langue buy dans le groupe atlantique de la famille kongo-kordofan*. Brusseles: Université Libre de Bruxelles PhD dissertation.

This work provides a description of the North Atlantic language Kobiana while also placing it in a comparative context. It contains a useful overview of previous comparative work on Atlantic as well as extensive discussion of important aspects of the internal classification of Atlantic and a possible proto-language.

Pozdniakov, Konstantin. 2015. Diachronie des classes nominales atlantiques: Morphophonologie, mophologie, sémantique. In Denis Creissels & Konstantin Pozdniakov (eds.), *Les classes nominales dans les langues atlantiques*, 57–102. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This is the most up-to-date available discussion of the reconstruction of noun classes in Atlantic. It expands on previous work by not only considering specific forms for noun classes markers that may have been found in the proto-language but also looking at noun class systems as a whole.

Sapir, J. David. 1971. West Atlantic: An inventory of the languages, their noun class systems, and consonant alternation. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 45–112. The Hague: Mouton.

This is an essential reference on Atlantic languages for the classification that it presents both because of its comprehensiveness based on information available at the time of publication and the extent to which subsequent work has relied on it.

Wilson, W. A. A. 1989. Atlantic. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 81–104. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents an overview of the Atlantic languages including discussion of their classification and grammar.

Wilson, W. A. A. 2007. *Guinea languages of the Atlantic group: Description and internal classification*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

This publication collects data collected by the author in the 1950s and 1960s on Atlantic languages in the southern part of the Atlantic area. It provides comparative grammatical and lexical data, including lexical data from other sources.

Benue-Congo

General sources on Benue-Congo

Benue-Congo is the largest commonly referenced subgroup of Niger-Congo, and its members include the Bantu languages, which dominate the southern part of Sub-Saharan Africa. Non-Bantu Benue-Congo languages are found in a geographically contiguous region of southern Nigeria and adjacent parts of Cameroon, with Bantu languages spread out over a much larger region to the south and east of the rest of the group. Current reference sources place around two thirds of all Niger-Congo languages within Benue-Congo. In terms of nomenclature and classification, Benue-Congo suffers from the same range of problems as Niger-Congo: Its status as a genealogical unit

is not clear, convincing criteria for establishing which groups belong to it have not been presented, and its subgroups are not firmly established beyond comparatively low-level ones. The division between Benue-Congo and Kwa (see *Kwa*), in particular, has fluctuated over the decades, with a number of language groups of Nigeria at the eastern border of Kwa and western border of Benue-Congo having been variously classified in one or the other subgroup. Here, Benue-Congo will be understood broadly to include both "West" Benue-Congo, which includes some languages that have also been classified as Kwa, and "East" Benue-Congo. Each is given their own sections below, with Bantu languages, classified within East Benue-Congo, also given their own section due to their significance within Niger-Congo studies. This broad understanding of Benue-Congo has sometimes been termed "New" Benue-Congo with "Old" Benue-Congo corresponding roughly to East Benue-Congo. Williamson 1989a, though now somewhat dated, remains the most extensive published general reference for the group. Williamson 1971 also remains a useful general reference. The most prominent effort at reconstruction is represented by the work of De Wolf 1971 on noun class systems. Babaev 2008 and Babaev 2010, taken together, constitute the most recent systematic attempt at Benue-Congo reconstruction, focusing on person marking. By virtue of their emphasis on family-wide reconstruction, these latter works are also useful for their collection of references on the family that are more up-to-date than some of the more standardly cited overview sources. Finally, it is worth noting that, due to the prominence of Bantu, the label Benue-Congo is variously used either in the "regular" way for a subgroup of Niger-Congo which includes the Bantu languages or to refer only to non-Bantu Benue-Congo languages. In particular, if a given source labels a language as belonging to "Benue-Congo", this will generally mean "non-Bantu Benue-Congo". Similarly, the term "Bantoid", the subgroup of Benue-Congo in which the Bantu languages have been classified is often used to mean "non-Bantu Bantoid". Because of changes in terminology, what are today typically referred to as the "Bantu" languages are in some sources referred to as that Narrow Bantu languages to distinguish them from other groups to which the term Bantu has been applied, such as Grassfields Bantu. As the largest subgroup of Niger-Congo, general references sources on the family also typically provide useful overview coverage of Benue-Congo.

Babaev, Kirill V. 2008. Reconstructing Benue-Congo person marking I: Proto-Bantoid. *Journal of West African Languages* 35. 131–183.

Babaev, Kirill V. 2010. Reconstructing Benue-Congo person marking II. *Journal of Language Relationship/*Вопросы языкового родства 4. 1–45.

These two papers together propose a reconstruction of Benue-Congo person marking, with Babaev 2008 first examining languages of Bantoid group (part of East Benue-Congo) and Babaev 2010 looking at the rest of Benue-Congo. In addition to developing a reconstruction, these papers also provide useful overviews of the existing comparative literature on Benue-Congo languages that is more up-to-date than the standard references.

De Wolf, Paul P. 1971. *The noun class system of Proto-Benue-Congo*. The Hague: Mouton.

This monograph proposes a reconstruction of the Proto–Benue-Congo noun class system on the basis of the examination of a relatively broad sample of Benue-Congo languages. While it cannot be considered a definitive reconstruction, no other work has yet appeared that supersedes it.

Williamson, Kay. 1971. The Benue-Congo languages and Ịjọ. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 245–306. The Hague: Mouton.

This chapter contains an overview of Benue-Congo languages based on what was known about them at the time, including discussion of subgrouping. The chapter focuses on what would today be called East Benue-Congo but also discusses the relationship between these languages and today's West Benue-Congo languages.

Williamson, Kay. 1989a. Benue-Congo overview. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 247–274. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This is a key general reference on Benue-Congo and has long served as the basis for subsequent classificatory work on the family. A significant portion of the chapter considers possible Benue-Congo lexical innovations.

West Benue-Congo

Languages that are today most commonly classified as West Benue-Congo were formerly classified as Eastern Kwa. The Kwa languages are generally seen as being quite closely connected to Benue-Congo languages within Niger-Congo, with a higher level subgroup name of Benue-Kwa, combining Kwa and Benue-Congo languages, sometimes used to reflect this. West Benue-Congo languages are situated largely in southern Nigeria in between "narrow" Benue-Congo languages to the east and "narrow" Kwa languages the west, which in part accounts for their classificatory fluctuation. The basis for the classification of West Benue-Congo languages with other Benue-Congo languages is largely lexical. From a typological perspective, they tend to pattern with nearby Kwa languages in having relatively isolating morphology. West Benue-Congo is not considered to be an established subgroup and, at least at this point, seems best understood as a term of convenience to refer to a set of subgroups whose status with respect to Benue-Congo and Kwa has yet to be established. The group includes languages that are very widely spoken in Nigeria, such as Yoruba and Igbo, as well as numerous smaller languages. The first two of these languages are associated with the relatively shallow subgroups of Yoruboid, discussed in Akinkugbe 1976, and Igboid, discussed in Manfredi 1989 and Williamson 2000. Capo 1989 also looks at Yoruboid, together with a small group of languages sometimes referred to as Akokoid under the heading of Defoid. Other groups within Benue-Congo include: Edoid, discussed in Elugbe 1989a and Elugbe 1989b; Idomoid, discussed in Armstrong 1983 and Armstrong 1989; and Nupoid, discussed in Blench 1989. These three groups are named after prominent languages within them, namely Edo, Idoma, and Nupe, respectively. The study of Ohiri-Aniche 1999 includes compares lexical data from a Yoruboid, Akokoid, Edo, Igbo, and Nupe, as well as Ukaan and a representative of the Akpes group, spoken in the West Benue-Congo area but whose classification is unclear.

Akinkugbe, Femi. 1976. An internal classification of the Yoruboid group (Yoruba, Iṣẹkiri, Igala). *Journal of West African languages* 11. 1–19.

This work examines lexicostatistical evidence, patterns of sound change, and lexical innovations with relevant to the consideration of the internal classification Yoruboid and also summarizes early classificatory work on the group.

Armstrong, Robert G. 1983. The Idomoid languages of the Benue and Cross River valleys. *Journal of West African Languages* 13. 91–149.

This article considers the comparative lexical and phonological data from the Idomoid languages, including extensive presentation of sound correspondences among the languages used in the study.

Armstrong, Robert G. 1989. Idomoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 323–358. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Idomoid group.

Blench, Roger M. 1989. Nupoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 305–322. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Nupoid group.

Capo, Hounkpati B. C. 1989. Defoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 275–290. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter provides an overview of the Yoruboid and Akokoid languages, treating them under the name of Defoid and includes brief discussion of their comparative phonology.

Elugbe, Ben Ohiọmamhẹ. 1989a. *Comparative Edoid: Phonology and lexicon*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

This monograph presents an extensive comparative study of Edoid, with an emphasis on the phonology and lexicon. It includes descriptions of individual Edoid languages as well as reconstructions and also provides valuable background information on the family.

Elugbe, Ben Ohiọmamhẹ. 1989b. Edoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 291–304. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Edoid group.

Manfredi, Victor. 1989. Igboid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 337–358. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Igboid group, including the presentation of a number of lexical correspondence sets.

Ohiri-Aniche, Chinyere. 1999. Language diversification in the Akoko area of western Nigeria. In Roger M. Blench & Matthew Spriggs (eds.), *Archaeology and language IV: Language change and cultural transformation*, 79–94. London: Routledge.

This study compares the small Akokoid group with representatives of other language groups of the area such as Edoid, Igboid, Yoruboid, and Nupoid, among others, including the language Ukaan which lacks a secure classification.

Williamson, Kay. 2000. Reconstructing proto-Igboid obstruents. In Vicki Carstens & Frederick Parkinson (eds.), *Advances in african linguistics*, 1–18. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

This paper considers the reconstruction of Igboid obstruents based on an examination of comparative data from varieties throughout the group. It includes lexical correspondence sets and proposed reconstructions.

East Benue-Congo: Non-Bantu

East Benue-Congo includes the (Narrow) Bantu languages, the most well-studied and well-known studied Niger-Congo group, and reference works on these are found in a dedicated section here in *Bantu*. Since the work of Greenberg 1963, Bantu has been viewed as a subgroup of Bantoid, which comprises the Bantu languages and a number of groups understood to be Bantu's closest relatives. The non-Bantu Bantoid languages occupy a compact region on either side of the southern Nigeria–Cameroon border. These languages are discussed in Watters 1989 and Blench 2015, and Watters 2003 considers the Grassfields Bantu languages, widely considered to be among Bantu's closes relatives within Bantoid. As with other groups of Niger-Congo, precise boundaries between Bantu and non-Bantu Bantoid as well as Bantoid and the rest of Benue-Congo have not been established. Hyman 1980 discusses data relevant to one hypothesis, involving nasal consonants in certain noun classes, that had been proposed for a Bantu-specific innovation but whose distribution proved to be more complicated than first thought. The other groups commonly placed within East Benue-Congo are Cross River, a group of languages spoken in southeastern Nigeria, discussed in Dimmendaal 1978, Faraclas 1989, and Connell 1994, as well as the groups Kainji, Plateau, and Jukunoid (with the latter two sometimes referred to under the name Platoid). Gerhardt 1989 provides an overview of all three groups, and further information on Plateau can be found in Gerhardt 1983 and about Jukunoid in Shimizu 1980. These groups are spoken in scattered areas of central Nigeria (with some Jukunoid languages also found in Cameroon). All of the East Benue-Congo groups remain understudied in comparison to Bantu.

Blench, Roger M. 2015. The Bantoid Languages. In *Oxford Handbooks Online: Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.)

This article is the most up-to-date available reference in the Bantoid group. It covers issues of classification and comparative grammar and has an extensive reference list.

Connell, Bruce. 1994. The Lower Cross languages: A prolegomena to the classification of the Cross River languages. *Journal of West African Languages* 24. 3–46.

This paper focuses on the comparative grammar of the Lower Cross subgroup of the Cross River group of Benue-Congo, with an emphasis on phonological characteristics. It also considers issues of internal classification of Lower Cross specifically and Cross River more generally.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 1978. *The consonants of Proto–Upper Cross and their implications for the classification of Upper Cross languages*. Leiden: Leiden University dissertation.

This is a comparative study of the Upper Cross subgroup of the Cross River languages. It provides an overview of the group as understood at the time of publication, a reconstruction of the subgroup's consonant system based on the comparative method, and proposes an internal classification of its languages.

Faraclas, Nicholas G. 1989. Cross River. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 377–399. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Cross River group.

Gerhardt, Ludwig. 1983. *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Sprachen des Nigerianischen Plateaus*. Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin.

This monograph is a comparative study of sixteen Plateau languages including lexical and grammatical reconstructions for different subgroups and consideration of connections between Plateau and other Niger-Congo groups.

Gerhardt, Ludwig. 1989. Kainji and Platoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 359–376. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Jukunoid, Kainji, and Plateau groups of Benue-Congo. These groups are not believed to be form a genealogical unit despite being covered together.

Shimizu, Kiyoshi. 1980. *Comparative Jukunoid* (two volumes). Vienna: Afro-Pub.

This work presents an internal classification of Jukunoid and reconstruction of Proto-Jukunoid phonology, the noun class system, and the lexicon, including reconstructions at different proposed stages of the development of the family.

Storch, Anne. 1999. *Das Hone und seine Stellung im Zentral-Jukunoid*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This work presents a grammatical description of the Jukunoid language Hone and also considers its relationship to other northern Central Jukunoid languages including comparisons with the Jukunoid reconstructions of Shimizu 1980 as well as with other Benue-Congo groups and levels of Niger-Congo.

Watters, John R. 1989. Bantoid overview. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 401–420. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

The chapter provides an overview of the non-Bantu Bantoid languages paying particular attention to issues of classification.

Watters, John R. 2003. Grassfields Bantu. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu languages*, 225–256. London: Routledge.

This chapter provides an overview of the Grassfields Bantu languages, a group generally believed to include some of the closest relatives to the (Narrow) Bantu languages, including consideration of their classification and grammatical characteristics.

East Benue-Congo: Bantu

Bantu languages are spoken in a large part of southern Sub-Saharan Africa. From a broad comparative perspective, it should be kept in mind that Bantu languages are generally agreed to be a relatively late offshoot from the rest of Niger-Congo. They are therefore not genealogically comparable to the other Niger-Congo groups considered here. Select references are provided given the significance of work on Bantu for Niger-Congo linguistics, and African linguistics more generally. It should be borne in mind, however, that the scholarship on Bantu languages is extensive, and comparative Bantu studies merit a distinct bibliography in its own right. The edited collection of Nurse & Philippson 2003a provides an excellent overview of the group, and contributions within it of comparative interest include, Güldemann (2003), Nurse & Philippson 2003b, and Schadeberg 2003. Maho 1999 is an extensive study of Bantu noun class systems, and Nurse 2008 provides a comprehensive discussion of tense and aspect marking in Bantu and also contains a wealth of of other comparative notes on verbal structure. The classic work of Meeussen 1967 has been very influential for work on Proto-Bantu reconstruction. Bostoen & Bastin 2016 discusses work on Bantu lexical reconstruction, and Grollemund 2012 covers key literature on Bantu classification.

Bostoen, Koen & Yvonne Bastin. 2016. Bantu lexical reconstruction. In *Oxford handbooks online: Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.

This article summarizes the history of work on Bantu lexical reconstruction and provides an overview of key issues in the reconstruction of the Proto-Bantu lexicon. It also considers the relationship between the reconstructions and the historical development of the Bantu languages.

Grollemund, Rebecca. 2012. *Nouvelles approches en classification: Application aux langues bantu du nord-ouest*. Lyon: Lumière University Lyon 2 doctoral thesis.

This thesis uses phylogenetic methods to explore the classification of Northwestern Bantu, the most linguistically diverse part of the Bantu area, and also includes data from Bantoid languages for comparative purposes. It contains a detailed summary of previous work on the internal and external classification of Bantu languages.

Güldemann, Tom. 2003. Grammaticalization. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu languages*, 182–194. London: Routledge.

This chapter considers processes of grammaticalization as evidenced by comparative work on Bantu languages including discussion of some of their implications for Niger-Congo reconstruction.

Hyman, Larry M. 1980. Reflections on the nasal classes in Bantu. In Larry M. Hyman (ed.), *Noun classes in the Grassfields Bantu borderland*, 179–210. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Department of Linguistics.

This paper provides detailed discussion of the so-called nasal classes found in languages of the Bantoid area. These are noun class markers which show nasal consonants in certain languages, including Narrow Bantu languages, but not in others. They have been considered to be a possible historical diagnostic for subgrouping within Benue-Congo.

Maho, Jouni. 1999. *A comparative study of Bantu noun classes*. Göteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

This work represents a comprehensive discussion of the comparative linguistics of Bantu noun class systems, including a systematic consideration of earlier work on the topic.

Meeussen, A. E. 1967. Bantu grammatical reconstructions. *Africana Linguistica* 3. 79–121.

This classic paper presents a series of Proto-Bantu reconstructions across all areas of grammar and has formed the basis of many subsequent studies.

Nurse, Derek. 2008. *Tense and aspect in Bantu*. Oxford: OUP.

This is a comprehensive study of tense and aspect encoding in Bantu including proposed reconstructions of the Proto-Bantu tense-aspect system and consideration of connections between Bantu languages and the rest of Niger-Congo in this domain.

Nurse, Derek & Gérard Philippson (eds.). 2003a. *The Bantu languages*. London: Routledge.

This handbook on the Bantu languages contains chapters discussing both the family as a whole as well as the grammars of specific representative Bantu languages. It provides an indispensable overview of the family of use to both specialists and non-specialists.

Nurse, Derek & Gérard Philippson. 2003b. Introduction. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu languages*, 1–12. London: Routledge.

This introductory chapter provides a concise overview the Bantu languages, including discussion of their distribution, historical development, and grammatical characteristics. It also considers the difficult issue of finding clear criteria to delineate a Bantu language group from Bantu's closest relatives in Bantoid.

Schadeberg, Thilo C. 2003. Historical linguistics. In Derek Nurse & Gérard Philippson (eds.), *The Bantu languages*, 143–163. London: Routledge.

This chapter summarizes the history of Bantu comparative linguistics, reconstructions of Proto-Bantu across all areas of grammar, and work on the internal and external classification of the group.

Dogon

The Dogon group is relatively small, with around twenty languages at current counts, mostly spoken in Mali. Until recently Dogon was relatively understudied. The detailed sociolinguistic survey of Hochstetler et al. 2004 makes clear that the internal diversification of the group was significantly greater than depicted in earlier references, and knowledge of the family has increased substantially as a result of a large-scale project whose results are collected in Moran et al. 2016. Moran & Prokić 2013 discusses aspects of the internal classification of Dogon languages. Two noteworthy earlier comparative works on Dogon include Bertho 1953 and Calame-Griaule 1956. As more data on Dogon languages has become available, convincing evidence for linking Dogon languages to other Niger-Congo languages has not emerged, and some current reference sources now treat it as an isolate family.

Bertho, J. 1953. La place des dialectes dogon (dogõ) de la falaise de Bandiagara parmi les autres groupes linguistiques de la zone soudanaise. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire* 15. 405–441.

This article discusses earlier work mentioning the Dogon languages, presents a classification of Dogon "dialects", considers issues of higher level classification, and provides a number of comparative wordlists.

Calame-Griaule, Geneviéve. 1956. Les dialects dogon. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 1. 62–72.

This article presents an overview of possible "dialect" divisions for Dogon, including a map, and is more culturally oriented in its exposition than Bertho 1953, published around the same time.

Moran, Steven, Robert Forkel & Jeffrey Heath (eds.). 2016. *Dogon and Bangime linguistics*. Jena: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History. http://dogonlanguages.org/.

This website collects information on research projects related to Dogon and other languages of the same general area, including Bangime, a language now classified as an isolate but formerly linked to Dogon. It includes a bibliography of materials related to Dogon.

Hochstetler, J. Lee, J. A. Durieux & E. I. K. Durieux-Boon. 2004. *Sociolinguistic survey of the Dogon language area* (SIL Electronic Survey Reports). Dallas, Texas: SIL International.

This work presents the results of a sociolinguistic survey of Dogon varieties and also includes extensive background information on previous work on Dogon as well as comparative wordlists. While it was produced for purposes of language standardization, its relative comprehensiveness makes it a useful reference.

Moran, Steven & Jelena Prokić. 2013. Investigating the relatedness of the endangered Dogon languages. *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 28. 676–691.

This paper is aimed at a digital humanities audience and examines the use of new quantitative methods to explore Dogon subgrouping. It also includes discussion of some other proposed subgroupings.

Gur

The distribution of the Gur languages is centered in Burkina Faso, and they are also found in neighboring countries such as Mali, Ghana, and Togo. The group is additionally known by the name Voltaic, though Gur is more common in English (and German) publications while French publications tend to use the other term (with spelling *voltaïque*). While the inclusion of languages classified as Gur within Niger-Congo is widely accepted, the genealogical unity of the group has not been established. In particular, the Senufo languages, in the western part of the Gur area, have been treated as forming a branch separate from Gur within Niger-Congo, and connections between Gur languages and some Adamawa languages have been proposed in Kleinewillinghöfer 1996b, discussed in the section on Adamawa languages. This suggests a general reassessment of the structure of the group may be needed. Bendor-Samuel 1971 provides an overview of Gur classification and grammar as understood at the time, and Naden 1989 remains the most up-to-date general overview. The family has seen more detailed comparative work than most other branches of Niger-Congo, in large part due to the work of Gabriel Manessy, including Manessy 1975, who conducted detailed comparative studies of specific Gur subgroups. Miehe 1997 summarizes Manessy's work in this area. Sambiéni 2005 provides something similar to the studies done by Manessy for another subgroup of Gur. Miehe & Winkelmann 2007 and Miehe et al. 2012 provide extensive data on comparative Gur noun classes, including reconstructions. Carlson 1997 discusses the Senufo languages, which, as noted above, are frequently grouped with Gur but may be better seen as a separate subgroup of Niger-Congo, and Kleinewillinghöfer 1997 provides an overview of the Gurunsi subgroup, which belongs securely to Gur. The work of von Roncador & Miehe 1998 provides a book-length bibliography of research on Gur languages done to that point.

Bendor-Samuel, John. 1971. Niger-Congo, Gur. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 141–178. The Hague: Mouton.

This overview chapter provides an overview classification of the Gur languages, as understood at the time, and discusses some grammatical features suggested as being typical of Gur languages.

Carlson, Robert J. 1997. The Senufo languages. *Cahiers Voltaïques/Gur Papers* 2. 23–42.

This article presents an overview of the Senufo group of languages, frequently grouped with the other Gur languages. It discusses previous work on the languages of the group, their internal classification, and grammatical characteristics.

Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. 1997. The Gurunsi languages: A summary of the state of art. *Cahiers Voltaïques/Gur Papers* 2. 43–52.

This paper summarizes the available descriptive work on languages of the Gurunsi subgroup of Gur, including explicit commentary on significant gaps in the available descriptions.

Manessy, Gabriel. 1975. *Les langues Oti-Volta: Classification généalogique d'un groupe de langues voltaïques*. Paris: SELAF.

This is one of several works of Gabriel Manessy developing reconstructions of the lexicon and grammar of Proto-Gur through the application of the comparative method. This particular monograph considers the

Oti-Volta subgroup of the family, and provides a good example of his approach. Miehe 1997 provides a summary of Manessy's work on Proto-Gur reconstruction.

Miehe, Gudrun. 1997. Gabriel Manessy et les langues voltaïques. *Cahiers Voltaïques/Gur Papers* 2. 3–16.

This paper summarizes the work of Gabriel Manessy, including his work on the reconstruction of Gur, and serves as a useful guide to his important work in this area. An example of this includes Manessy 1975.

Miehe, Gudrun, Brigitte Reineke & Kerstin Winkelmann (eds.). 2012. *Noun class systems in Gur languages, volume 2: North Central Gur languages*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This is the second volume in a series whose first volume is Miehe & Winkelmann 2007. It is comparable in structure, providing descriptions of noun class systems for more than twenty Gur languages and including significant comparative discussion. Most of the languages considered are part of the North Central subgroup of Gur.

Miehe, Gudrun & Kerstin Winkelmann (eds.). 2007. *Noun class systems in Gur languages, volume 1: Southwestern Gur languages (without Gurunsi)*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This edited volume is the first in a series whose second volume is Miehe et al. 2012. It looks at the noun class systems of more than twenty languages of the southwestern part of the Gur area from a historical perspective, including general comparative overviews and more targeted comparative discussion of specific subgroups.

Naden, Tony. 1989. Gur. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 141–168. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents an overview of the Gur languages including discussion of their classification and grammar.

von Roncador, Manfred & Gudrun Miehe. 1998. *Les langues Gur (Voltaïques): Bibliographie commentée et inventaire des appellations des langues*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This book contains a bibliography on materials related to Gur languages with around 2,000 entries, including unpublished works. Entries include keywords and, in some cases, additional annotations, and there is a language index.

Sambiéni, Coffi. 2005. *Le Proto-Oti-Volta-Oriental*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This monograph develops lexical and morphological reconstructions of the languages of the Eastern Oti-Volta subgroup of Gur.

Ijoid

The Ijoid group comprises the Ịjọ languages plus the language Defaka, all spoken in the Niger Delta region. The unity of the Ịjọ is not contested, though the case for linking Ịjọ and Defaka is less clear, as discussed in Connell et al. 2012. There has been relatively little work done on the group. Lee & Williamson 1990 offer a lexicostatistically-based internal classification of Ịjọ, and Williamson 1971 and Jenewari 1989 provide overview discussion. Jenewari 1983 was the first work to propose a connection between Ịjọ and Defaka. While Ijoid has long been treated as part of Niger-Congo for referential purposes, no strong evidence has been presented connecting it to the other Niger-Congo subgroups, and some current general references treat it as an isolate family.

Connell, Bruce, William Bennett, Inoma Essien, Ebitare Obikudo, Akin Akinlabi & Ozo-mekuri Ndimele. 2012. Defaka and Ịjọ: A reassessment of the Ijoid relationship. In Matthias Brenzinger & Anne-Maria Fehn (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL 6)*, 145–153. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This paper reassesses the status of Ijoid based on new data collected on Defaka and puts forth evidence to support the hypothesis of a close geneaological connection between Ịjọ and Defaka.

Jenewari, Charles E. W. 1983. *Defaka: Ịjọ's closest linguistic relative*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press (also published in *Current approaches to African linguistics, volume 1*, edited by Ivan R. Dihoff and published by Foris Press).

This work provides information on Defaka in a comparative context, paying significant attention to linguistic connections between Defaka and Ịjọ.

Jenewari, Charles E. W. 1989. Ijoid. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 105–118. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents an overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Ijoid group.

Lee, J. D. & Kay Williamson. 1990. A lexicostatistical analysis of Ịjọ dialects. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics* 1. 1–10.

The paper presents previous classifications of Ịjọ as well as a new classification based on a lexicostatistical investigation of 100-word wordlists of thirty-three Ịjọ varieties.

Williamson, Kay. 1971. The Benue-Congo languages and Ịjọ. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 245–306. The Hague: Mouton.

This chapter is primarily focused on the Benue-Congo languages, but it also includes discussion of the Ịjọ's possible classification, some of its grammatical characteristics, and its internal differentiation.

Kordofanian

The Kordofanian languages are spoken in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, geographically isolated from the rest of Niger-Congo. The inclusion of Kordofanian within Niger-Congo is due to Greenberg 1963, and the alternate name of Niger-Kordofanian for Niger-Congo reflects a hypothesis (not proven) that Kordofanian was the first branch to split from the rest of the family. The Nuba Mountain region is quite linguistically diverse, and only some of its languages are considered to be Niger-Congo. Even those that are considered Niger-Congo are not currently believed to form a coherent subgroup, but, rather, constitute up to four independent branches, Heiban, Talodi, Rashad, and Katla. (Greenberg 1963 included a fifth group, Kadugli, that is no longer considered to be part of Niger-Congo.) Schadeberg 1981a developed the most commonly used classification of the group. Schadeberg 1981b and Schadeberg 1981c consider the Heiban and Talodi subgroups respectively, and Norton & Alaki 2015 is a more recent study of Talodi. Stevenson 1956–1957 remains the most detailed available comparative linguistic study of the entire Nuba Mountain region, including the Kordofanian languages. Schadeberg 1989 provides an overview of the group, and Blench 2013 and Hammarström 2013 provide more recent reassessments of the relationship between the Kordofanian languages and other Niger-Congo groups.

Blench, Roger M. 2013. Splitting up Kordofanian. In Thilo C. Schadeberg & Roger M. Blench (eds.), *Nuba Mountain language studies*, 571–586. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This paper reassesses the status of Kordofanian within the Niger-Congo context. It concludes thate there is no evidence for the coherence of Kordofanian as a subgroup of Niger-Congo and provides possible cognates between Kordofanian languages and other Niger-Congo languages.

Hammarström, Harald. 2013. Noun class parallels in Kordofanian and Niger-Congo: Evidence of genealogical inheritance? In Thilo C. Schadeberg & Roger M. Blench (eds.), *Nuba Mountain language studies*, 549–569. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This paper reassesses the status of the evidence for a genealogical connection between Kordofanian languages and other Niger-Congo groups and argues that the existing evidence does not offer definitive proof of a connection. Part of its discussion includes a concise and useful overview of the groups associated with Kordofanian.

Norton, Russell & Thomas Kuku Alaki. 2015. The Talodi languages: A comparative-historical analysis. *Occasional papers in the study of Sudanese languages* 11. 31–161.

This paper provides a detailed overview of the Talodi group of Kordofanian, including lexical comparison, lexicostatistical analyses of internal subgrouping, and proposed segmental and morphological reconstructions.

Schadeberg, Thilo C. 1981a. Das Kordofanische. In Bernd Heine, Thilo C. Schadeberg & Ekkehard Wolff (eds.), *Die Sprachen Afrikas*, 117–128. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

This chapter provides an overview of the Kordofanian languages with a focus on their noun class systems. It specifically argues for the exclusion of the Kadugli languages from Kordofanian (and, by extension,

Niger-Congo), and presents a table suggesting links between Kordofanian languages and other Niger-Congo groups.

Schadeberg, Thilo C. 1981b. *A survey of Kordofanian, volume 1: The Heiban group*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

This volume presents a survey of the Heiban subgroup of Kordofanian, including an overview of the languages of the group, short grammatical sketches, and a comparative analysis.

Schadeberg, Thilo C. 1981c. *A survey of Kordofanian, volume 2: The Talodi group*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

This volume presents a survey of the Talodi subgroup of Kordofanian, including an overview of the languages of the group, short grammatical sketches, and a comparative analysis.

Schadeberg, Thilo C. 1989. Kordofanian. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 66–80. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter provides an overview of Kordofanian including consideration of subgrouping, evidence linking Kordofanian languages to other Niger-Congo groups, and comparative remarks on phonology and noun class systems.

Stevenson, Roland C. 1956–1957. A survey of the phonetics and grammatical structure of the Nuba Mountain languages, with particular reference to Otoro, Katcha and Nyimaŋ. *Afrika und Übersee* 40:73–84, 93–116; 41:27–65, 117–152, 171–196.

This collection of papers constitutes a published version of the author's doctoral thesis. It remains the most comprehensive survey of the linguistic situation of the entire Nuba Mountain region and includes data on all of the Kordofanian groups.

Kru

The Kru languages are spoken mainly in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. They are currently recognized as a distinct subgroup of Niger-Congo and considered to represent a true genealogical entity, though there are a few languages referentially assigned to Kru whose genealogical status is not clear. Marchese 1989 provides an overview of the family, and Marchese 1984 is the most comprehensive comparative work available. Comparative aspects of the family are also discussed in Vogler 1974 and Welmers 1977. Marchese 1986 looks at the expression of tense, aspect, modality, and polarity in Kru from a comparative and historical perspective. Kaye et al. 1982 bring a number of studies of languages of the family together, though it is not a traditional comparative work.

Kaye, Jonathan D., Hilda J. Koopman & Dominique Sportiche (eds.). 1982. *Projet sur les langues Kru: Premier rapport*. Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal.

This collection of papers covers various aspects of the grammar of a number of Kru languages, including varieties of Bete, Vata, and Dida. Most of the papers have a theoretical orientation.

Marchese, Lynell. 1984. *Atlas linguistique kru* (third edition). Abidjan: ACCT-ILA.

This work presents information on the internal classification, phonology, grammar, and lexicon of Kru languages of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It contains an extensive amount of data and constitutes the best available overview of the entire group.

Marchese, Lynell. 1986. *Tense/aspect and the development of auxiliaries in Kru languages*. Arlington, TX: SIL and the University of Texas, Arlington.

This thesis comprises a comparative study of tense and aspect encoding systems in Kru languages including historical syntactic analysis of their development. In addition, it provides an overview of the Kru languages more generally.

Marchese, Lynell. 1989. Kru. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 119–139. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter presents a concise overview of the classification and comparative linguistics of the Kru languages.

Vogler, Pierre. 1974. Le problème linguistique kru: Éléments de comparaison. *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 44. 147–176.

This paper considers the external relations of Kru languages via lexical comparison with other Niger-Congo groups. The methodology used is problematic (see Welmers 1977). This paper contains an early argument that Kru should not be grouped with Kwa, which is now the standard view.

Welmers, William E. 1977. Kru languages: A progress report. In Paul A. Kotey & Haig Der-Houssikian (eds.), *Language and linguistic problems in Africa: Proceedings of the VII Conference on African Linguistics*, 353–362. Columbia, SC: Hornbeam.

This paper presents a synthesis of the work available on Kru at the time, including a historical interpretation of Kru's internal diversification. Like Vogler 1974, it suggests Kru should be seen as its own branch of Niger-Congo.

Kwa

The Kwa languages are found in the southern parts of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, as well as a small adjacent part of Nigeria. The group of languages encompassed by the name Kwa has fluctuated, and here the label is used for what is sometimes referred to as "New" Kwa in the literature. This encompasses the Potou-Tano, Gbe, and Ghana-Togo Mountain language groups, among others, but excludes the West Benue-Congo languages, discussed above in *West

Benue-Congo*, which have been grouped with the other Kwa languages under the name Kwa in some publications, following Greenberg 1963. While the status of the languages grouped together under the Kwa label as members of Niger-Congo is not contested, they are not considered to be an established genealogical unit. The most salient feature of the Kwa languages is the fact that many have lost functioning noun class systems, a trait associated with West Benue-Congo languages as well, though this is not true of the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages. Stewart 1971 and Stewart 1989 provide overview discussions of the Kwa languages. Hérault 1983 provides extensive information on the Kwa languages of Côte d'Ivoire. Capo 1991 is a comparative study of the Gbe subgroup of Kwa. Heine 1968 was the first major work on the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages and remains an important reference today, and Blench (2009) and Kropp Dakubu (2017) constitute more recent considerations of this group from a comparative perspective.

Blench, Roger M. 2009. Do the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages constitute a genetic group? *Journal of West African Languages* 36. 19–35.

This paper considers the genealogical status of the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages and proposes a new classification of the group's languages based on a comparison of lexical data.

Capo, Hounkpati B. C. 1991. *A comparative phonology of Gbe*. Berlin: Foris.

This monograph discusses the comparative phonology of the Gbe languages. It makes use of the comparative method as well as insights from generative phonology.

Heine, Bernd. 1968. *Die Verbreitung und Gliederung der Togorestsprachen*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

This monograph is a comparative study of the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages, including consideration of the group's internal classification, reconstruction, and connections to other Kwa languages.

Hérault, Georges (ed.). 1983. *Atlas des langues kwa de Côte d'Ivoire* (second edition; two volumes). Abidjan: ACCT-ILA.

These volumes present extensive comparative overviews of the Kwa languages of Côte d'Ivoire. The first volume presents overviews of specific languages. The second provides lexical data and contains a number of comparative studies.

Kropp Dakubu, M. E. 2017. Sub-classifying the languages of the Lower Volta Valley: Towards redefining Kwa. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 70. 283–301.

This paper looks at the status of the Ghana-Togo Mountain languages in the broader Kwa context. It provides evidence for the genealogical unity of the group and for a close connection to the Potou-Tano subgroup of Kwa.

Stewart, John M. 1971. Niger-Congo, Kwa. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 179–212. The Hague: Mouton.

This overview chapter includes discussion of tone and vowel systems in Kwa languages as well as issues in their classification. The group of languages that it considers encompasses languages that are not considered Kwa today.

Stewart, John M. 1989. Kwa. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 216–245. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter discusses the classification of Kwa, summarizes work on languages of the group, and considers issues in the comparative segmental phonology of the group. It introduces the "New" Kwa understanding of the composition of the group that dominates classifications today.

Mande

The Mande languages are found in West Africa, largely in the interior, with a geographic center around southwest Mali. Their distribution ranges from Senegal to Nigeria, though they are not all spoken contiguously and their distribution is relatively scattered in the eastern part of this area. The genealogical unity of the group is not controversial, but the classification of Mande as part of Niger-Congo is not universally accepted, in particular because Mande languages lack any clear evidence of the noun class systems that are a crucial diagnostic for relatedness within Niger-Congo. Overviews of the group can be found in Welmers 1971, Dwyer 1989, and Kastenholz 1991/1992. Dwyer 1998 considers Mande's place within Niger-Congo, and Vydrin 2009 presents a relatively recent lexicostatistically-based internal classification of the family. Kastenholz 1996 and Schreiber 2008 are monographs dedicated to the comparative linguistics and reconstruction of specific Mande subgroups, and Vydrin 2004 considers the comparative phonology of Western and Southeastern Mande. Kastenholz 1988 presents a bibliography of work done on Mande. For further discussion of key references for Mande, see the separate Oxford Bibliographies article *Mande Languages[obo-9780199772810-0144]*.

Dwyer, David J. 1989. Mande. In John Bendor-Samuel (ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages: A classification and description of Africa's largest language family*, 47–65. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

This chapter summarizes previous work on Mande, discusses the group's internal classification, and considers its comparative phonology and morphology.

Dwyer, David J. 1998. The place of Mande in Niger-Congo. In Ian Maddieson & Thomas J. Hinnebusch (eds.), *Language history and linguistic description in Africa*, 27–36. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

This article considers the relationship between Mande and the rest of Niger-Congo, summarizing previous work and providing an examination of comparative lexical data.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 1988. *Mande languages and linguistics*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

This work provides a bibliography of publications on Mande languages, mostly written in English, French, and German. Many entries have brief annotations, and titles of works not written in English are translated into English.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 1991/1992. Comparative Mande studies: State of the art. *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 12/13. 107–158.

This article provides a critical summary of previous comparative work on Mande with an emphasis on issues surrounding family's internal classification and reconstruction.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 1996. *Sprachgeschichte im West-Mande*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This work develops a reconstruction of Western Mande and also provides more general information on Mande and discusses methodological considerations in the family's reconstruction.

Schreiber, Henning. 2008. *Eine historische Phonologie der Niger-Volta-Sprachen: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Sprachgeschichte der östlichen Ost-Mandesprachen*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

This monograph is a comparative study of a subgroup of Eastern Mande languages which have a discontinuous distribution around Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria. It includes proposed lexical and morphological reconstructions.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2004. Areal and genetic features in West Mande and South Mande phonology: In what sense did Mande languages evolve? *Journal of West African Languages* 30. 113–126.

This article considers strikingly different phonological profiles of certain subgroups of Mande and evaluates how they can be interpreted historically.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2009. On the problem of the Proto-Mande homeland. *Journal of Language Relationship/*Вопросы языкового родства 1. 107–142.

This paper provides a lexicostatistical classification of the Mande languages based on 100-word Swadesh lists and also considers what Mande lexical data can reveal about a possible Mande homeland.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2016. Toward a Proto-Mande reconstruction and an etymological dictionary. *Faits de langues* 47. 109–123.

This article discusses the reconstruction of Proto-Mande, including consideration of issues in phonological and morphological reconstruction, as well as the author's work on an etymological dictionary for the group. It also considers Mande's status within Niger-Congo and presents lexical data suggesting links between Mande and other Niger-Congo groups.

Welmers, William E. 1971. Niger-Congo, Mande. In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current trends in linguistics VII: Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 113–140. The Hague: Mouton.

This overview chapter presents a classification of Mande languages known at that time, critically discusses previous work on the family, and considers some grammatical features of Mande languages of comparative interest.

Ubangian

The Ubangian group of languages (also known simply as Ubangi) has often been classified as a branch of Niger-Congo together with the Adamawa languages since Greenberg 1963. These latter group is discussed separately here in *Adamawa*, and the overview chapters of Samarin 1971 and Boyd 1989 discussed in that section treat both groups together. When linked with Adamawa, Ubangian has also been labeled Eastern in the name Adamawa-Eastern. Clear evidence linking Ubangian to Adamawa has not emerged and recent work has emphasized connections between Adamawa and Gur (see *Gur*) instead of Ubangian languages. Moreover, the connection between Ubangian languages and Niger-Congo more generally is not considered as well established as for Adamawa, and some classifications treat it as an isolate family. The treatment of Ubangian as a true genealogical entity has been widely accepted, but clear evidence for this has also not been presented. Boyeldieu & Cloarec-Heiss 1986 and Moñino 1988 present comparative studies dedicated specifically to Ubangian, and Moñino 1995 presents an exceptionally detailed study of the Gbaya-Manza-Ngbaka subgroup. Olson 1996 looks at the Banda subgroup and is useful as an English-language reference on the comparative linguistics of the entire group.

Boyeldieu, Pascal & France Cloarec-Heiss. 1986. Dialectométrie lexicale dans le domaine oubanguien. In Gladys Guarisma & Wilhelm J. G. Möhlig (eds.), *La méthode dialectométrique appliquée aux langues africaines*, 331–393. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.

This is a lexicostatistical study of five Ubangian subgroups based on a sample of around twenty languages. The details of how forms were compared is laid out much more clearly than in most work adopting lexicostatistical methods, and the data underlying the study is provided.

Moñino, Yves (ed.). 1988. *Lexique comparatif des langues oubanguiennes*. Paris: Geuthner.

This is a detailed comparative study of the Gbaya-Manza-Ngbaka subgroup of Ubangian, including phonological and morphological sketches of fifteen varieties, presentation of sound correspondences, and lexical and morphological reconstructions. It also includes an annotated bibliography of linguistic and ethnographic work relevant to the study of the subgroup.

Moñino, Yves. 1995. *Le proto-gbaya: Essai de linguistique comparative historique sur vingt-et-une langues d'Afrique centrale*. Paris: Peeters.

This is the most extensive available comparative work on Ubangian languages, including an introductory overview of the group, seven short chapters on subgroups of Ubangian and specific individual languages, and comparative lexical data for over thirty languages with representation of the major subgroups.

Olson, Kenneth S. 1996. On the comparison and classification of Banda dialects. In Lise M. Dobrin, Kora Singer & Lisa McNair (eds.), *Papers from the 32nd regional meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society: Volume 1: The main session*, 267–283. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.

This paper discusses the Banda subgroup of Ubangi including reconstructions of certain sounds and a proposed internal classification. It also serves as a good English language resource discussing key comparative work on the family written in French.

Language change, language contact, and typology

Beyond work providing comparative overviews of Niger-Congo and its subgroups emphasized above, there are also a wide range of studies focusing on Niger-Congo languages that consider the grammatical evolution and typology of languages of the family, the way Niger-Congo languages have spread over the African continent, and the effects of language contact on Niger-Congo languages. Due to the enormous spread of Niger-Congo languages over Africa and the fact that languages of the family tend to be better studied than languages of the other major African language groups, in many cases, works focused on African languages in general in effect also serve as useful references for Niger-Congo. These include Clements & Rialland 2008 and Creissels et al. 2008 which look at the phonological and morphosyntactic typology of African languages respectively. This is also the case for the treatment of the distinctive African language area found in Güldemann 2008. Hyman 2004 and Good 2012 are specifically focused on Niger-Congo and consider the development of divergent morphological profiles among languages of the family for verbs and nouns respectively. Dimmendaal 2001 and Good 2017 look at Niger-Congo from an areal and contact perspective, and Lüpke & Storch 2013 considers the topic of multilingualism in Africa, including extensive discussion of Niger-Congo languages, which is a crucial topic for understanding language contact and change on the continent. Bostoen et al. 2015 and Pakendorf et al. 2011, both focused on Bantu, provide examples of how interdisciplinary work can shed light on Niger-Congo prehistory.

Bostoen, Koen, Bernard Clist, Charles Doumenge, Rebecca Grollemund, Jean-Marie Hombert, Joseph Koni Muluwa & Jean Maley. 2015. Middle to late Holocene paleoclimatic change and the early Bantu expansion in the rain forests of Western Central Africa. *Current Anthropology* 56. 354–384.

This article synthesizes results from linguistics and other disciplines, including archaeology and biogeography in order the shed light on the dynamics of the Bantu expansion. Included with the article are commentaries from other scholars.

Clements, George N. & Annie Rialland. 2008. Africa as a phonological area. In Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.), *A linguistic geography of Africa*, 36–85. Cambridge: CUP.

This chapter examines the phonological properties of African languages, looking at both segmental and prosodic features. While not specifically focused on Niger-Congo, extensive data from Niger-Congo languages is considered, making this is a good introduction to Niger-Congo phonological typology.

Creissels, Denis, Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, Zygmunt Frajzyngier & Christa König. 2008. Africa as a morphosyntactic area. In Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.), *A linguistic geography of Africa*, 86–150. Cambridge: CUP.

This chapter examines the morphosyntactic properties of African languages, including a proposed list of features that can be thought of as characteristic of Africa. While not specifically focused on Niger-Congo, extensive data from Niger-Congo languages is considered.

Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 2001. Areal diffusion versus genetic inheritance: An African perspective. In Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald & R. M. W. Dixon (eds.), *Areal diffusion and genetic inheritance:*

Problems in comparative linguistics, 359–392. Oxford: OUP.

This chapter examines the issue of areal diffusion of grammatical features in Africa, with a focus on Niger-Congo. It provides detailed discussion of grammatical features with significant areal skewing in Niger-Congo as well as a consideration of more general topics in the examination of areal phenomena in Africa.

Good, Jeff. 2012. How to become a "Kwa" noun. *Morphology* 22. 293–335.

This article examines divergence in the noun class systems of Niger-Congo languages and its possible historical causes with a focus on the fact that some Niger-Congo languages completely lack functioning noun class systems while others show the largest such systems known.

Good, Jeff. 2017. Niger-Congo languages. In Raymond Hickey (ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of areal linguistics*, 471–499. Cambridge: CUP.

This chapter looks at Niger-Congo languages from an areal perspective. It considers the different linguistic areas that Niger-Congo languages belong to as well as lower-level patterns of language contact.

Güldemann, Tom. 2008. The Macro-Sudan belt: Towards identifying a linguistic area in northern Sub-Saharan Africa. In Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.), *A linguistic geography of Africa*, 151–185. Cambridge: CUP.

This chapter discusses the grammatical characteristics found in languages in an east-west band of Africa south of the Sahara from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ethiopian highlands. Many Niger-Congo languages are found within this area, and it is important for understanding the areal typology of the family.

Hyman, Larry M. 2004. How to become a "Kwa" verb. *Journal of West African Languages* 30. 69–88.

This article examines divergences in the verbal systems of Niger-Congo languages and their historical interpretation. Some Niger-Congo languages exhibit morphologically rich agglutinative verbal structures while others are largely morphologically isolating, and this is correlated with distinctive syntactic profiles as well.

Lüpke, Friederike & Anne Storch. 2013. *Repertoires and choices in African languages*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

This book focuses on patterns of multilingualism in Africa, with many examples drawn from Niger-Congo languages. It provides a strong introduction to the complex sociolinguistic milieus which characterize many communities speaking Niger-Congo languages as well as a critical commentary on standard approaches to language classification in Africa.

Pakendorf, Brigitte, Koen Bostoen & Cesare de Filippo. 2011. Molecular perspectives on the Bantu expansion: A synthesis. *Language Dynamics and Change* 1. 50–88.

This article provides a critical review of Bantu comparative linguistic data and genetic data from speakers of Bantu languages to determine its significance for the understanding of the dynamics of the Bantu expansion into southern Sub-Saharan Africa.