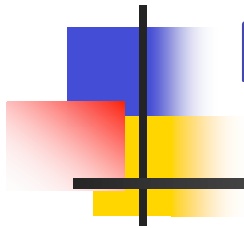
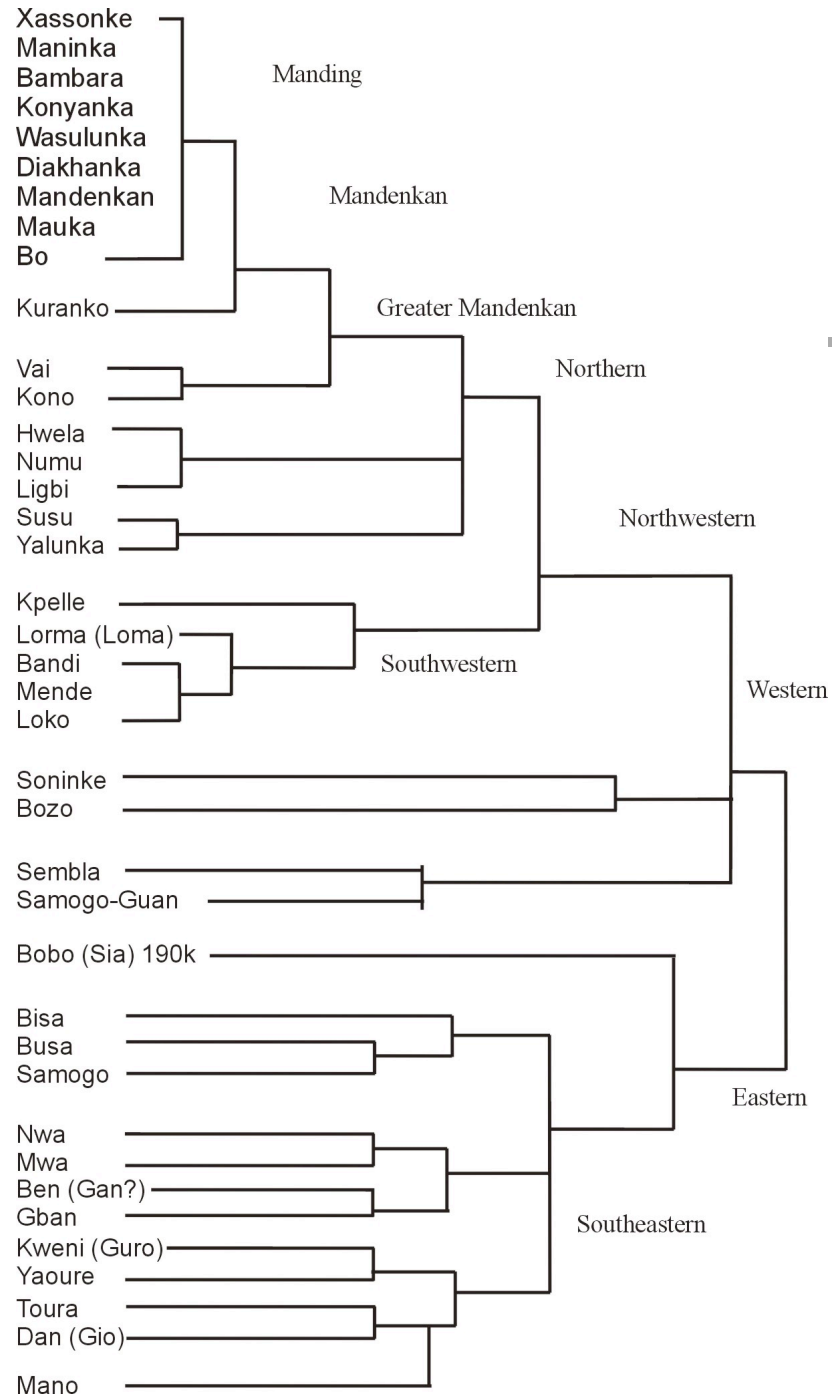


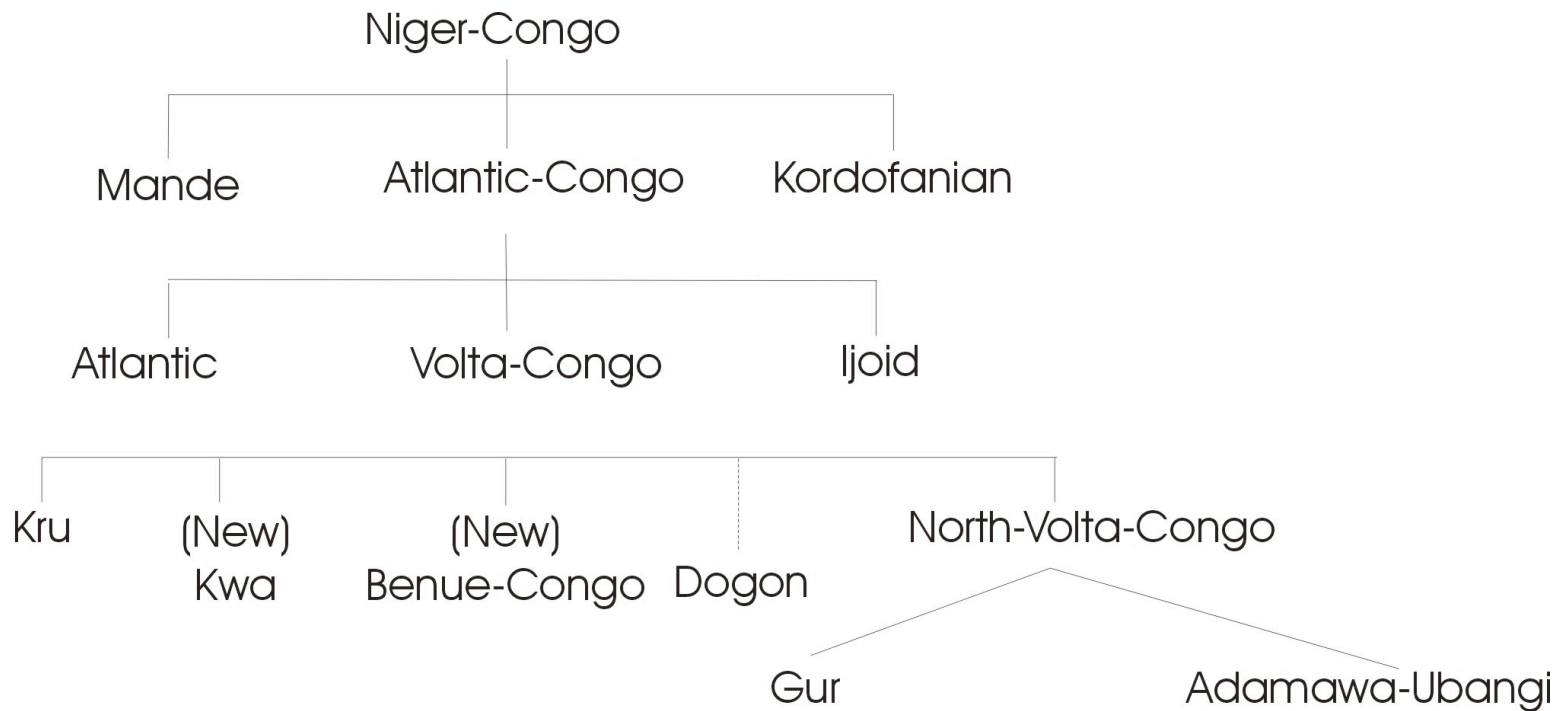
Generic nouns, classifiers and the external genealogical relationship of Mande



Reference classification (Dwyer)



Williamson (1989)



The standard view

- Mande is well defined as a group
- Mande is related to other groups like Gur, Dogon, Kru, Kwa ...
- Mande is the first offshot
- Mande has „lost“ its noun class system
- Mande languages are isolating

Interdependence of typological and genealogical relationship

- The Niger Congo proposal is based on morphological traits
- The mostly used trait is the noun class system
- "Such reliance on the noun-classifier concord systems constitutes a serious problem for classification. The trait is not convincing as a "genetic marker"." (Campbell 2008, p. 131)

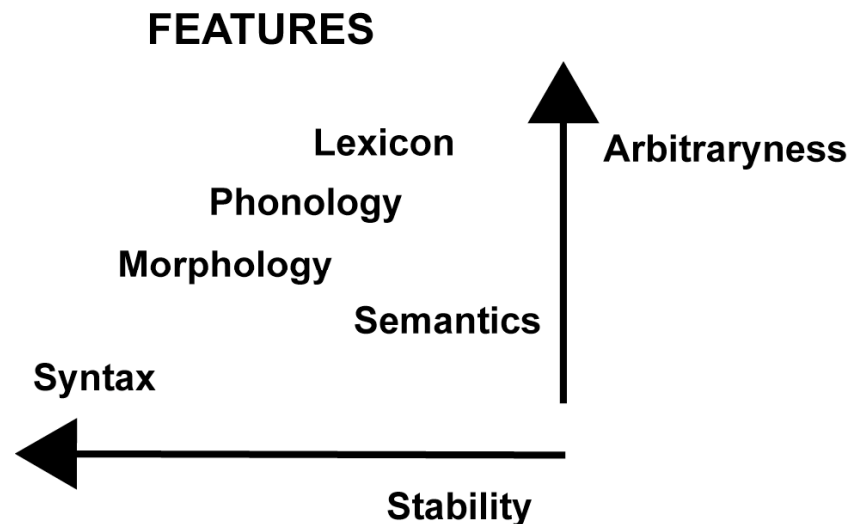
Typological disposition: interdependence of typological and genealogical relationship

- Stability & Arbitrariness
- Distantly related languages should be typologically related if the considered trait must be regarded as historically stable.
- Sub-traits of noun classes
 - Number (obligatory marking, pairing)
 - Classifiers
 - Agreement
 - Morphemes

Stability & reconstruction

- Reconstruction of „proto-frames“: sound reference
- Paradigms
- Phrases
- Segmental stability of morphemes

Time depth, stability and arbitrariness



More stable features are less arbitrary than weak features, while more arbitrary elements are less stable.

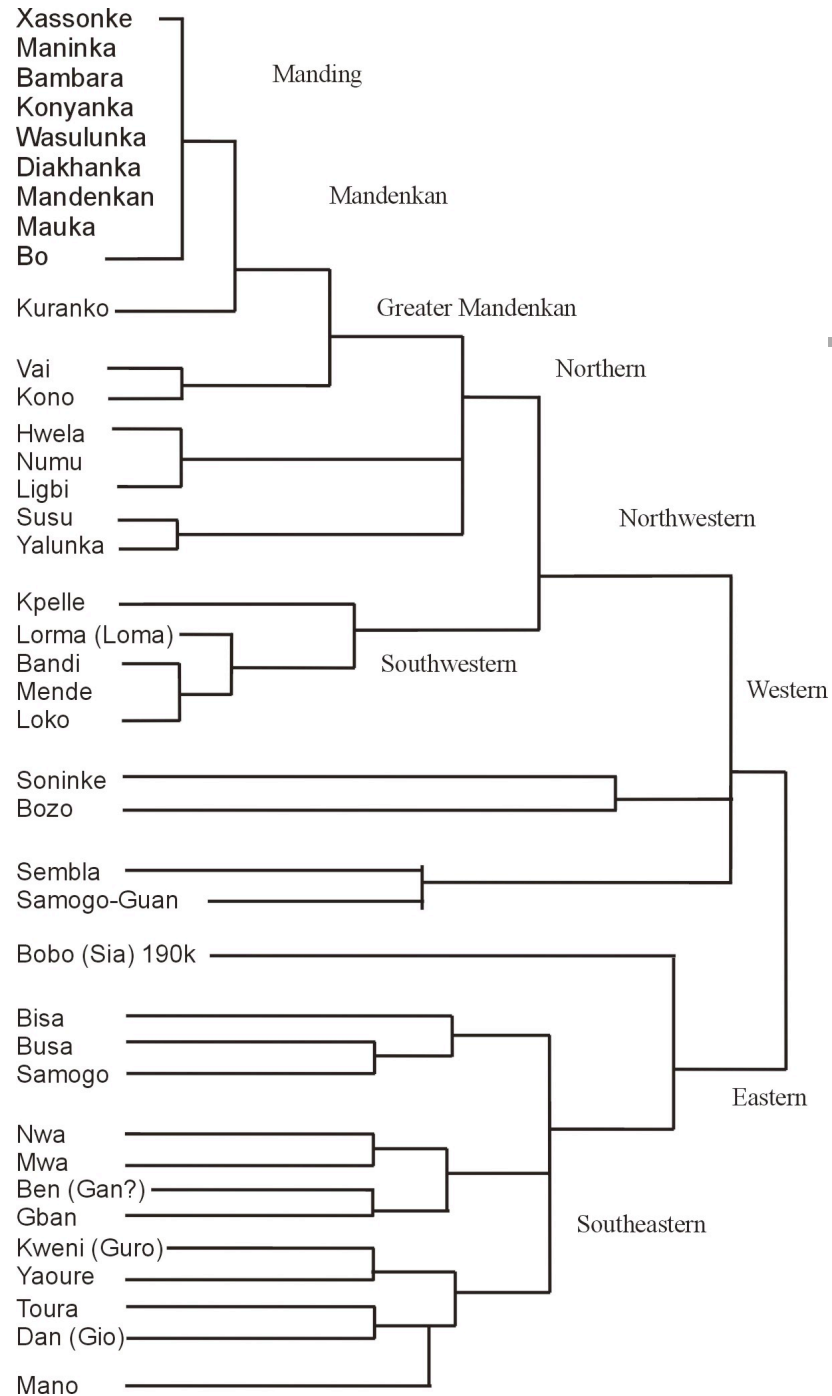
Mande traits

- Formal morphological distinction of nominal/verbal stems
 - Isomorphism, especially in Manding and South-western Mande
 - Nouns with arguments: dependent nouns
- Lack of a clear distinction between the lexical and syntactic morphology between the lexical and the phrase level
 - “Pseudo-composition”
 - Object noun incorporation with light verbs
 - “Phrase nouns” (Noms conglomerées”)
 - “Archinominaux” Adverbo-nominaux
 - Phrase-final marking of categories like number

Noun classification & number

- Limited typology
- Number
- Compounding & classification
- Test languages
 - Soninke
 - Koranko
 - Mende
 - Toura
 - Samo

Reference classification (Dwyer)



Number features

- „General number“ (Corbett 2000)
- General number is not widespread (Corbett 200:12)
- General number in Ful

<i>general</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
toti 'toad(s)'	totii-ru 'toad'	totii-ji 'toads'
nyaari 'cat(s)'	nyaarii-ru 'cat'	nyaarii-ji 'cats'
gerto 'hen(s)'	gerto-gal 'hen'	gertoo-ɗe 'hens' ²
bofo 'egg(s)'	wofoo-nde 'egg'	bofoo-ɗe 'eggs'
biini 'bottle(s)'	biinii-ri 'bottle'	biinii-ji 'bottles'

The forms which have no suffix express general meaning, that is they are used when number is irrelevant, for instance (Koval' 1979: 11):

- (8) ko biini tun waawi marde beere
PARTICLE bottle only can.PERFV preserve beer
'only a bottle/bottles can preserve beer'

Number and specificity in Mande

„It has been noted that, in the Mande languages, the stem form of impersonal nouns has a generic reference, not specifically singular or plural, but that it is possible to express individuated pluralization“ (Welmers 1974:219)

Number and specificity in Koranko

Gen		Spec	
		Sg	Pl
#Ø		#é	#é-nu

Number and specificity in Mende

Gen		Spec	
Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
#Ø	#(ng)a	#í	#í-sia

Number and specificity SAMO type

Samo

Gen/Sg		Pl
#Ø		#nɔ

Soninke

Gen/Sg		Pl	
Ø		-o	-nù

Number and specificity in Toura

Toura

Gen/Sg		Pl	
		"simple"	associative
#Ø		#bò	#nù

Number and specificity type Mano

Gen	Human- gen	Human- spec	Non- human- gen	Non- human- spec
	Pl	Pl	Pl	Pl
#Ø	#nɔ	#ni	#nɔ	#vo

Generic & specific nouns in Mande

- Kastenholz (1986) specific/generic in Central Mande

	<i>generic</i>	<i>specific</i>	
1. Manding, Koranko	∅	-(Y)É	<i>indefinite</i> <i>definite</i>
2. Vai	∅	-(Y)É	<i>indefinite</i> <i>definite</i>
3. Southwestern		∅	<i>indefinite</i>
		-(G)É	<i>definite</i>
4. Susu, Soninke	∅ ²¹	E	<i>indefinite</i> <i>definite</i>

Schreiber (2008) specific/generic in Proto Niger Volta

Numerussystem des PNV:

<i>indefinit/generisch</i>	<i>definit-Sg.</i>	<i>definit-Pl.</i>
∅	*li	*no

Number in Mande

- Singular/plural is stable
- Generic/specific is stable
- Phrase final number marking is stable
- Generic/singular distinction is unstable
- Generic/specific linking to number is found in some languages

Noun classification in Mande

- Mande has „lost“ its noun class system
- Proto-Mande creolisation hypothesis Historical sociolinguistic implications
 - „Heavy“ contact and shift
 - Early empires and urban centers
- Morphosyntactic implications
 - Gur languages:
 - Creolized Bantu languages

Noun classification in Mande

"Vestiges of an original noun class system have been identified in number of languages in which such a system is no longer grammatically functional, or at best functions only at the derivational level. ... Within Niger-Congo, the Mande languages show nothing at all comparable to the class and concord systems ..."

(Welmers African Language Structures 1974, p. 214)

Genericity & classification

- Generic classifiers (Cantonese, Ben Au Yeung, p.1)

(generic noun phrase, non-characterizing sentence)

Saigwaa gamziu jiging maai saai laa
Watermelon this-morning already sell all Sfp
'Watermelons were all sold out this morning'

(generic noun phrase, characterizing sentence)

Saigwaa dosu zung hai die soengmin
Watermelon often grow on ground surface
'Watermelons often grow on the ground surface'

(indefinite noun phrase, characterizing sentence)

Jat go saigwaa gau sik saam go jan.
One Cl-sg watermelon enough eat three Cl-sg person
'One watermelon is enough for three persons to eat'

Genericity & classification

Common nouns as general classifiers:

„ Noun classifiers categorize the referent noun with which they co-occur. The semantic relationship between the classifier and the noun is generic-specific, ... Yidiny (...) bama waguja ('person man') 'a man' These can be independent lexemes, as above, or they can appear as affixes on a noun.“

Common nouns in Kpelle

In addition to personal free noun stems, there is a large number of compound personal free nouns, of which the final component in the singular is /nũu/ 'person', with the regular tonal replacive of low for stem tone typical of compounds. Such compounds have plurals ending with /bɛla/, which is interpreted as being derived from a stem with unknown tone which does not appear except in such compounds. Thus, from a phrase /tɪ kɛ/ 'do work' (noun plus verb):

tɪ kɛ-nũu 'a workman' tɪ kɛ-bɛla 'workmen'

Conclusion

- Generic/specific is pertinent in Proto-Mande
- PM noun phrase structure
 - *(n/a-)N-SPEC [...] #NUM
- – = suffix
- # = clitic
- Formal distinction of two plural markers had been pertinent:
 - *bo
 - *nu

Implications

- No grammaticalization of classifiers in Proto-Mande-dialects
- Grammaticalisation of articles/demonstratives ?
- „Barrier“ to the development into noun classes?
- Mande is related to Atlantic, Gur, Kwa etc.
- Mande is Niger Congo or not by definition