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Research on the Plateau languages of Central Nigeria

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Abstract:

The paper is an overview of scholarship on the Plateau language group of Central Nigeria to November 2020. It reviews the existing published and manuscript sources and describes modern scholarship. It provides an overview of the literature on the internal and external classification of these languages and the issue of endangerment, which is severe for some languages. It summarises the use of Plateau languages in education and the media, which has undergone a major revival after 2010. There is now a concerted push for the use of Plateau languages in education. The paper then reviews each subgroup, presenting an internal classification and references to publications. Based on the existing evidence, a fresh classification of Plateau is presented.

Keywords: Plateau languages, classification, media, Nigeria

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Plateau languages

Among the many language families represented in Nigeria, one of the largest and most complex is the Plateau languages considered to be a major subgroup of Benue-Congo (Greenberg 1963; Gerhardt 1989; Blench 2000a). Plateau languages dominate the centre of Nigeria, spreading from Lake Kainji to the region south of Bauchi. Excluding Kainji and Jukunoid, there are some 40 languages according to the most recent count,¹ with a few more to be discovered. Although most Plateau populations are small (usually 2–10,000 speakers), there are ca. 1 million speakers of Plateau languages, with the bulk of the numbers made up from large groups such as Berom and Eggon. Some

1 See Blench 2020.

Plateau languages, such as Sambe and Yangkam, are moribund and others, e.g., Ayu, are severely threatened. Hausatisation and urbanisation are the main forces leading to this decline in both competence and numbers of speakers but there are countervailing trends such as increased pride in cultural heritage and desire for literacy (Blench 1998). Research on Plateau languages is far from vibrant; regrettably, the Nigerian (and indeed international) university system has largely failed this family of languages in recent years. The map in Figure 1 shows the approximate locations of Plateau language subgroups.



Figure 1. Schematic map of Plateau language subgroups

It seems never to have been in doubt that Plateau languages form part of the broader unit represented by Benue-Congo (Williamson 1989; Williamson & Blench 2000). Westermann (1927) assigned the few languages for which he had data to a ‘Benue-Cross’ family, corresponding to present-day East Benue-Congo, although later in Westermann & Bryan (1952) these were classified as ‘isolated units’. The first record of Plateau is Castelnau (1851) who gives a wordlist of Hyam in the rather unfortunate context of its title, ‘*une nation d’hommes à queue*’.² Koelle (1854) gives wordlists of Ham (Hyam), Koro of Lafia (Migili) and Yasgua (Yeskwa). Gowers’ (1907) unpublished

2 I would like to record my thanks to Professor Ludwig Gerhardt for both draw-

but widely circulated wordlists include Fyem, Kibyen (= Berom) and Jos (= Izere). A more extensive listing of language names is in Meek (1925, II:137), where the classification (contributed by N.W. Thomas) lists them under ‘Nigerian Semi-Bantu’ along with Kainji and Jukunoid. Meek (1931, II: 1–128) published wordlists of the Tyap cluster and Hyam. However, the modern subclassification of Plateau derives principally from Greenberg (1963: 8) who proposed dividing Westermann’s ‘Benue-Cross’ languages into seven co-ordinate groups including modern-day Kainji and Jukunoid, implying that they form a flat array with no internal nesting. Greenberg’s split Benue-Congo into four subdivisions correspond to modern terminology as shown in Table 1.

Shimizu (1975b), who surveyed the languages of the Jos area, was the first to report numerous languages and to propose a tentative classification for them. With numerous emendations and additions these have been reprised in almost all subsequent works (notably Williamson and Shimizu 1968; Williamson 1971, 1972; Maddieson 1972; Hansford et al. 1976; Gerhardt 1989; Crozier and Blench 1992; Storch et al. 2011; Blench 1998, 2000a, 2018).

Table 1. Greenberg’s divisions of Benue-Congo and modern terminology

Subdivision	Greenberg Term	Modern name
A	Plateau 1a,b	Kainji
	Plateau 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Plateau
B	Jukunoid	Jukunoid
C	Cross River	Cross River
D	Bantoid	Bantoid versus Bantu

This paper³ is an overview of the Plateau languages, incorporating recent findings and presenting a fresh but still tentative classification.

ing my attention to this intriguing document and providing me with a photocopy of it.

3 This paper started life as a presentation at the Hamburg meeting, March 2004, marking the retirement of Professor Ludwig Gerhardt. In the following sixteen years it has been revised numerous times and now no longer bears much resemblance to the original text. It would be impossible to list all those who have worked with me over this period, but the late Barau Kato, Selbut Longtau and Michael Bulkaam have been my principal co-workers on field data collection. John Nengel (†), Bitrus Kaze, Deme Dang, Ruth Adiwu, Barnabas Dusu (†), Gideon Asuku, Alex Maikarfi, Wayo

Figure 1 shows the locations of the different subgroups of Plateau in Central Nigeria, using the names of subgroups established in this paper, set out in §2. It covers the sources of data, the media profile of Plateau and the issue of the decline in research. The second section presents the subgroups of Plateau, following the sequence of the overall classification adopted in this paper, reporting on newly available data.

1.2 Data sources

Publications on Plateau languages has largely been descriptive material on individual languages (e.g. Lukas & Willms 1961; Wolff 1963; Mackay 1964; Bouquiaux 1964, 1967, 1970, 2001; Gerhardt 1969, 1971, 1972/3a, 1972/3b, 1973/4, 1974, 1980, 1983a,b,c, 1987, 1988a,b, 1989, 1992, 1994a,b, 2005; Dihoff 1976; Robinson 1976; Stofberg 1978; Wolff & Meyer-Bahlburg 1979; McKinney 1979, 1983, 1984, 1990; Jockers 1982; Hyuwa 1982, 1986; Maddieson 1982, n.d. a,b; Adwiraah & Hagen 1983; Hagen 1988; Price 1989; Adwiraah 1989; Sibomana 1980, 1981a,b, 1985; Longtau 1993, 2008; Shimizu 1996; Blench 2002b; Blench & Gya 2011; Blench & Longtau 2011; Wilson 2003; Marggrander 2019). With the exception of the material in Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist (BCCW) (Williamson & Shimizu 1968; Williamson 1972), comparative materials on Plateau languages are limited. Despite its sometimes eccentric choice of items and often defective entries, the BCCW remains the only large published compilation of data.⁴ Often the source of wordlists is ‘Nigerian government files’ which generally means an orthographic list filled in by an administrator. Prior classifications such as Greenberg have relied on unpublished wordlists, also usually orthographic,

Bai and Daniel Gya have been crucial to the development of dictionary materials in their languages. Staff members at NBTT and SIL Jos, particularly David Crozier, Matthew Harley and Russell Norton have been always helpful in giving me access to unpublished materials and to discuss issues relating to particular languages. I would particularly like to thank Mark Gaddis for arranging workshops on the Koro cluster languages, Andy Kellogg for setting up meetings with the Icen community, Mike Rueck for keeping me informed about community meetings and literacy progress and Ezekiel Foron for arranging a Berom Dictionary Review workshop in 2009. The present revision includes all data collected up to November 2020.

4 The lexical data from the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist has been computerised and is now available on the Comparalex website (Snider et. al. 2020). The classification it uses follows Greenberg (1963).

from a variety of sources, notably University of Ibadan students. The Summer Institute of Linguistics,⁵ based in Zaria and later Jos, collected a large number of Swadesh lists in the 1960s and 1970s and these were the basis of some parts of the first edition of the Index of Nigerian Languages (Hansford et al. 1976) although the classification of Nigerian languages used there was contributed by Carl Hoffmann. During the 1980s and 1990s there was virtually no survey work,⁶ although quite large lexical, and in some cases grammatical, databases have been collected in relation to Bible translation. A development since 2017 has been the establishment of a Language Documentation Course within the linguistics and Bible Translation Programme at TCNN (Theological College of Northern Nigeria) in Jos. Students undergoing training in this programme are creating lexical databases and analysing a wide variety of languages, including some Plateau.

The Comparative Plateau Project was begun by the author in the early 1990s, starting from a perception that although linguistic field research in Plateau was largely moribund, there was substantial interest from communities in the study, and in particular, the writing of these languages. As a consequence, yearly field trips since 1993 have been undertaken to create primary documentation on the status, location and classification of all languages usually treated as Plateau. In conjunction with this, more extensive documentation, particularly the creation of dictionaries, is under way where the phonology and orthography of a language has been established. To date, primary documentation on some twenty-seven languages is available as well as much additional material on specific languages.⁷ Dictionary work is ongoing in Tarok, Izere, Mada, Berom, Iten, Eggon, Rigwe and Tyap (Appendix I). New research findings on individual languages are included in Blench 2020.

1.3 Internal and external classifications of Plateau

None of the authors who have classified Plateau languages have presented more than very incomplete evidence for their classifications. This is not a criticism; faced with large arrays of data it is easier

5 Now SIL International.

6 Survey work began again in 2006.

7 Further information and some of the datasheets can be downloaded at the author's website (Blench n.d.).

to set out what appears to be the case impressionistically than to write a monograph demonstrating it. Shimizu (1975a) and Gerhardt & Jockers (1981) constitute partial exceptions, presenting lexicostatistical classifications of sample languages together with Kainji and Jukunoid. Their calculations, however, do not include many of the languages under discussion here. However, this neither demonstrates the unity of Plateau nor even the coherence of its usually accepted subgroups. The series of publications on Plateau subgroups, especially Greenberg's Plateau 2 and 4, by Gerhardt (1972/3a, 1972/3b, 1974, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1989, 1994a, b) assume the boundaries of these groups, they do not demonstrate it.

A particular issue in the internal classification of Plateau and Jukunoid is the notion of a 'Benue' grouping. Shimizu (1975a: 415) proposed that some branches of Plateau should be classified with Jukunoid. In particular, he argued that Eggon (and by implication the other Plateau V languages, including Nungu and Yeskwa) and Tarokoid (at that time consisting only of Yergam (= Tarok) and Bash-erawa (= Yanjam)) formed a group together with Jukunoid. This emerged from his lexicostatistic tables and was further supported by five isoglosses, the words for 'drink', 'tail', 'meat', 'fire', and 'four'. This expanded group he christened 'Benue'. Gerhardt (1983b) questioned Shimizu's hypothesis noting that his own lexicostatistical work (Gerhardt & Jockers 1981) did not support this, and casting doubt on the five isoglosses proposed by Shimizu. The 'Benue' group continued in a sort of half-life, appearing in Gerhardt (1989) as a subgrouping of Jukunoid and Tarokoid against the rest of Plateau. Blench (2005) has presented evidence that there is a genuine boundary between Plateau and Jukunoid, drawing on lexical and morphological evidence.

This lack of agreement is a reflection of a more general problem, the evidence for a bounded group 'Plateau' in opposition to Kainji, Jukunoid, Dakoid or Mambiloid, other members of the Benue-Congo complex. Blench (2005) presents preliminary evidence to distinguish Plateau from these other groups. The relationships between Plateau languages, their coherence as a grouping and their links with Jukunoid and Kainji remain undetermined. Rowlands (1962) was the first to suggest that there was a dichotomy between the languages of the Jos area, which he linked to West Kainji, and the remainder, but his short wordlists were far from constituting linguistic proof. Compar-

ative analysis has produced some tentative evidence for isoglosses defining Plateau (see Appendix II), but so far no phonological or morphological innovations that would define the group have been proposed. Some of this diversity is undoubtedly due to long-term interactions with the mosaic of Chadic languages also occurring on the Jos Plateau (Blench 2003; Longtau this volume).

1.4 Language status and language endangerment

Plateau languages have always been spoken by relatively small populations. No group of Plateau speakers has formed large centralised political structures resulting in the consequent spread of a language of intercommunication. In the earliest colonial censuses, numbers assigned to particular ethnic groups were often in the hundreds (e.g. Temple 1922; Gunn 1953, 1956). Generally speaking, the overall demographic increase in Nigeria has led to the expansion of human populations and thus numbers of speakers. Few Plateau languages today have less than several thousand speakers unless they are moribund or undergoing language shift. Groups with a larger population, such as the Berom and Tarok, now have more than a hundred thousand speakers.⁸

One Plateau language, Sambe (Alumic §2.5), has gone extinct during the period of the survey. Sambe had six speakers in 2001, all over eighty years old, and just two in 2005. Everything that is known about Sambe is published in Blench (2015). Sambe speakers have turned to Ninzo, a neighbouring Plateau language. Yangkam (Tarokoid §2.1) is severely threatened. In 1991, it probably had ca. 400 speakers, the youngest around fifty. Most speakers have now switched to Hausa. Other languages, such as Ayu, still have several thousand speakers, but the children are no longer speaking Ayu and it is thus also endangered.

1.5 Plateau languages in education and the media

Plateau languages have a limited profile in education or the media. The main development of orthography has been by missionaries, especially SIL International, in relation to Bible translation. In some ways this has been problematic, as literacy is seen as only important for Christians. There were also secular attempts at literacy under

⁸ Numbers are politics in Nigeria today and I deliberately allow these figures to remain vague.

the Northern Regional Language Authority (NORLA) programme in the colonial era (Wolff 1954), although these never had a major impact. The Nigerian Government has been publishing a series entitled ‘Orthographies of Nigerian languages’ since the late 1970s and some Plateau languages have been detailed in these publications (Kuhn & Dusu 1985 for Berom; Hyuwa 1986 for Kaje; Longtau 2000 for Tarok; Goro 2000 for Koro Ashe). However, these are not necessarily linked with a literacy programme except where individual authors are part of such programmes (e.g. Hanni Kuhn and Barnabas Dusu) and there has been no necessary language development as a consequence. Broadly speaking, the languages with the greatest number of speakers have seen the most work, but sometimes literacy programmes are initiated for political or personal reasons.

In recent years, there has been a significant expansion in lobbying for local languages by organisations such as CONAECDA (Figure 2). This seeks to pick up the sometimes moribund literacy programmes in relation to Bible translation and repurpose them in secular literacy programmes. This has been relatively successful in Plateau State, where the government has in principle approved the development of teaching materials in eight languages. Unfortunately, as of September 2020, this is on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is clear motivation to continue programme development.⁹

Table 2 lists the Plateau languages, noting whether literacy materials exist in the language, whether work towards a Bible translation exists and whether there is any broadcasting or other electronic media. The marking of a + sign does not necessarily mean the literacy programme is viable or the Bible translation is read (see paper by Kato, this volume). Jili [= Migili] has literacy materials and a Bible but it is virtually unread, in part because of problematic orthography decisions.



Figure 2. CONAECDA logo.
Source: CONAECDA.

⁹ However, during 2021, this programme has now revived.

Table 2. Literacy, scripture translation and broadcast media in Plateau

	Language	Literacy	Scripture	Media
Northwest	<u>Eda</u> ¹⁰	+	—	—
	<u>Edra</u>	—	—	—
	Kuturmi (Obiro and Ikryo)	—	—	—
	Kulu	—	—	—
	Ejẹgha [Idon]	—	—	—
	Doka	—	—	—
	Ehwa [Iku-Gora-Ankwe]	—	—	—
Beromic	Berom	+	+	+
	Cara	—	—	—
	Iten	+	+	—
	Shall-Zwall	—	—	—
West-Central				
Izere cluster	Izere of Fobur	+	+	+
	Icèn	+	+	—
	Ganàng	—	—	—
	Fèràn	—	—	—
Rigwe	Rigwe	+	+	+
Southern Zaria	Jju	+	+	—
Tyap cluster	Tyap	+	+	+
Hyamic	Shamang	—	—	—
	Cori	—	—	—
	Hyam cluster (incl. Kwyyeny, Yaate, Sait, Dzar, Hyam of Nok)	+	—	—

10 Underlines are an orthographic convention, here denoting open /ɛ/.

	Language	Literacy	Scripture	Media
	Zhire	—	—	—
	Shang	—	—	—
	Gworok	—	—	—
	Atakar	—	—	—
	Kacicere	—	—	—
	Sholyo	—	—	—
	Kafancan	—	—	—
Koro cluster	Ashe	+	+	—
	Tinɔr (Waci-Myama)	+	+	—
	Idū	+	+	—
	Gwara	—	—	—
	Nyankpa-Bade	+	+	—
Gyongic	Gyong (= Kagoma)	+	—	—
	Angan	—	—	—
Ninzic	Ninzo	+	+	—
	Ce	+	—	—
	Bu-Niŋkada	—	—	—
	Mada	+	+	—
	Numana-Nunku-Gwantu-Numbu	—	—	—
	Ningye-Ninka	—	—	—
	Anib	—	—	—
	Ninkyob	+	—	—
	Nindem	—	—	—
	Nungu	—	—	—
	Ayu?	—	—	—
Ndunic	Ndun-Nyeng-Shakara [= Tari]	—	—	—

	Language	Literacy	Scripture	Media
Alumic	Toro	—	—	—
	Alumu-Təsu	—	—	—
	Hasha	—	—	—
	Sambe (†)	—	—	—
Southern				
Eggonic	Eggon	+	+	—
	Ake	—	—	—
Jilic	Jili	+	+	—
	Jijili	—	—	—
South-eastern	Fyem	—	—	—
	Horom	—	—	—
	Bo-Rukul	—	—	—
Tarokoid	Tarok	+	+	+
	Pe [= Pai]	—	—	—
	Kwang-Ya-Bijim-Legeri	—	—	—
	Yanƙam [= Bashar]	—	—	—
	Sur [= Tapshin]	—	—	—
Eloyi	Eloyi	—	—	—

The existence of a literacy programme does not imply that vernacular literacy is used outside the restricted context of Christianity. Indeed, many ‘literacy’ programmes, including those sponsored by churches, exist to teach reading in either Hausa or English. To teach people to read their own language is to face considerable obstacles, not the least of which is orthography. Nonetheless, since around 2015, there has been a major upsurge of interest in vernacular literacy which is gradually moving beyond the restructured context of Bible Translation. Figure 3 shows the sign to the Rigwe Bible Translation Office in Miango where work on the New Testament was completed. Figure 4 shows a community-initiated workshop to develop a dictionary of

the Rigwe language, held in Miango in November 2020. A Rigwe orthography was first designed in the mid-1980s, so this illustrates the long periods required to bring the community on board. It seems likely that similar initiatives will spring up across the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

In recent times, vernacular languages have expanded into a whole variety of new media outlets, especially the larger ones. The following short sections consider the role these play in extending the reach of Plateau languages.

Radio

The use of radio in broadcasting Plateau languages probably dates back to the 1970s.¹¹ Plateau State Radio and Television (PRTV) broadcasts in Berom, Tarok and Izere. Nassarawa State Radio and Television (NRTV) broadcasts in Mada, Eggon and Jili [= Migili] as well as Alago (Idomoid) and Gwandara (Chadic). The broadcasts are mostly news but there are also some magazine programmes. The content is tightly controlled and consists primarily of existing news broadcasts translated into local languages. No FM licenses have been granted for broadcast in local languages.

Audio recordings

Missionary organisations have produced audio recordings in many vernacular languages. Many languages which have complete or partial Bible translations also now have digital recordings of religious stories. Very local cassettes, CDs and MP3 files of music in Plateau languages are also available in markets in Jos and Kaduna.

Television

The first television broadcasts in Plateau began in 1974 although they were halted several times under the various military governments. Tel-



Figure 3. Typical Bible translation office sign. Source: author.

¹¹ Thanks to Selbut Longtau and Barau Kato (†) for information included in the media section and to Andy Warren-Rothlin for illuminating discussions on the politics of Bible translation and information on current projects.

evision is at both state and federal levels but PRTV (Plateau Radio and Television) is the most accessible station. Vernacular broadcasts are usually translated government official news; the federal government remains highly suspicious of television in minority languages. Broadcasts are currently transmitted in



Figure 4. Rigwe community dictionary workshop, November 2020. Source: Daniel Gya.

Izere, Berom, Tarok, Rigwe and KiCe [Rukuba]. These last two languages were added following the Jos crisis in 2001, which reflects the pressure that minorities are beginning to exert in the state. More languages are likely to be added in the coming years. There appear to be no television broadcasts in Plateau languages of Nasarawa State.

Film and video

Christian groups have been active in promoting the ‘Jesus film’, a film with a standard script that is translated into many languages that do not necessarily have a literacy programme. This is a film about the life of Jesus, of generally Protestant persuasion, that has been promoted by missionary groups around the world and is available on DVD and video. The film exists in Tarok, Berom, Izere and Mada and many more languages are in preparation. Pop music videos sung in some Plateau languages have begun to appear; for example, Hyam songs are now available as commercial VCDs. Even more ambitious, a secular feature film in the Berom language has been made for issue on DVD.

Internet and mobile phones

Nigerians are enthusiastic adopters of social media, and smartphones are now extremely common. Numerous languages have *ad hoc* orthographies so that users can communicate on Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. Despite lacking numerous features for standard writing systems, they seem to work, largely because the languages and idioms are common

to users. These new social media communications are in particular need of more in-depth documentation.

It has become possible to translate lexical data into small dictionaries suitable for mobile phones, and a number of languages have developed such dictionaries, for example, Pyam [= Fyem] and Izere. It is extremely likely this will become the most important way communities access literacy material in the future.

1.6 The research agenda

It would be pleasant to report that Plateau languages were the focus of a lively research community. But this is far from the case; indeed the opposite is true. Academic research on Plateau is at a very low level. Little new work has been undertaken since the mid-1990s except that reported here. Why is this so?

First and foremost this is because of they are low priority for Nigerian researchers. Nigerian universities are in decay and staff morale is low, in part because of uncertain pay and conditions, but also because of a lack of support for research. The other bodies with a record of interest in Plateau languages, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (now SIL International) and its sister-body, the Nigerian Bible Translation Trust, now regard academic publication as a very low priority and little has appeared in recent years. The Euro-American research establishment has also been virtually eliminated for different reasons. Research is now typically in collaboration with expatriate and out-of-context informants, despite the oft-publicised dangers of this approach. The economic slowdown in Nigeria has meant that fewer speakers of minority languages are visiting or studying in Europe and America, and thus opportunities for new insights into linguistic theory are significantly reduced. This illustrates all too starkly the neo-colonial nature of fashionable linguistics, which takes no interest in the languages for themselves, but values them merely for their contribution to passing seminar-room fashion. Despite much talk, Endangered Languages research has made a very limited contribution, to judge by its profile in Nigeria, which has by far the largest number of endangered languages in Africa. Although fieldwork in Africa is still supported, the negative image of Nigeria deters many potential fieldworkers. For a country that has more than one-quarter of all African languages, research is at vanishingly low levels.

By contrast, there has been a significant expansion of interest in literacy and Bible translation across the Nigerian Middle Belt since 2004. Projects that were previously moribund or inactive have been revived by a new generation of enthusiastic young speakers. A good example is Rigwe (see anon. 2006) and Eda [=Kadara]. NBTT is initiating workshops for locally funded groups as is the 'Luke Partnership' a twice-annual workshop for Bible translation and literacy. Local publishing in Nigeria is gradually expanding, but mostly in the popular arena, focusing on proverbs, oral literature and reading and writing. Publications include Gochal (1994) on Ngas, Mamfa (1998) and Lar & Dandam (2002) on Tarok and Nyako (2000) on Izere. This type of publishing will probably continue to increase and take in more ethnolinguistic groups. Also encouraging is the revival of survey work; a team active since 2006 linked to NBTT has circulated a number of studies of poorly-known language areas, including Ahwai (the Ndunic languages) and the Koro cluster.

2 Plateau languages by subgroup

2.1 Tarokoid

In Greenberg (1963), Yergam (Tarok) and Basherawa [=Yankam] were considered to be Plateau 7 languages. These two languages have been put together in most subsequent publications, notably in the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist (Williamson & Shimizu 1968; Williamson 1972) and Hansford et al. (1976). In Gerhardt (1989), Plateau 7 is rechristened Tarokoid in keeping with the terminological style of the volume. Two other languages, Turkwam and Arum-Chessu, assigned to Benue in Hansford et al. (1976), were added to Tarokoid. In Crozier and Blench (1992) another language, Pai, is added, following Maddieson (1972) who had already put it in Plateau 7, while confining Turkwam and Arum-Chessu to their own subgroup (Plateau 10 in Maddieson 1972). Pai had previously led a somewhat nomadic existence, classified as Plateau 6 by Greenberg (1963), as Plateau 4 in Williamson (1971) and as a separate co-ordinate branch of Plateau in Hansford et al. (1976).

Turkwam and Arum-Chessu are not included in the BCCW, while in most cases the data-slot for Pai and Basherawa is unfilled. The assignation of Toro [=Turkwam] and Alumu [=Arum-Chessu] to Tarokoid is completely erroneous. Longtau (1991) tried to make

sense of this grouping in historical terms and came out with no very convincing result. Toro and Alumu are clearly related to one another and are tentatively assigned to an ‘Alumic’ subgroup of Plateau (see §2.5 below). Tarokoid should be restricted to Tarok, Pe, Yanƙam, the Kwanka cluster and Sur. Sur is Tapshin, a language referred to in Hansford et al. (1976) with the mysterious annotation “? Eloyi”. Despite this, Sur is undoubtedly part of Tarokoid. In 2006, extended work on Kwaƙ [= Vaghat, Kwanka] showed that, far from being part of Ninzic, as suggested by earlier classifications, it is related to Sur and thus part of Tarokoid. This implies that the other languages with which it is closely related, Boi, Bijim and Legeri, are also Tarokoid (cf. Norton 2018). A dictionary of Tarok and substantial wordlists of the other Tarokoid languages have been collected, which form the basis of its classification (Blench 2004). Figure 5 shows the internal structure of Tarokoid, based on this new evidence.

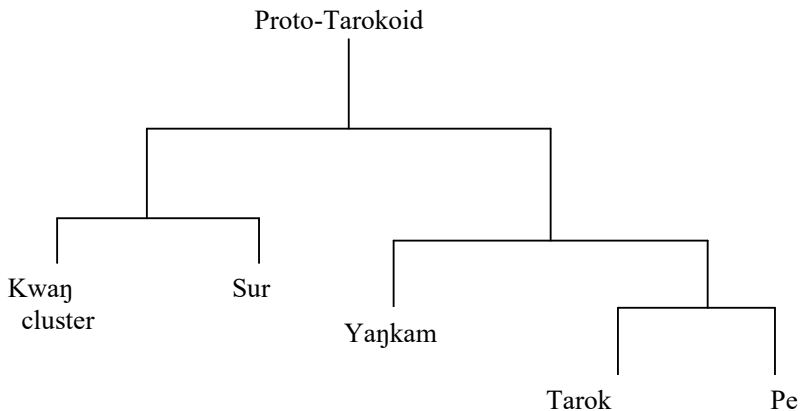


Figure 5. Internal structure of Tarokoid. Source: Blench (2004)

Of the Tarokoid languages, only Tarok itself is beginning to have an acceptable level of documentation, i.e with a series of papers on grammar and morphology and a substantial draft dictionary (Longtau 2008; Blench & Longtau 2011). Yanƙam is severely threatened and should be subject to an intensive investigation while speakers are still fluent.

2.2 Central

2.2.1 Northwest Plateau

Northwest Plateau consists of Èda/Èdra, Kuturmi (Obiro and Ikryo), (i)Kulu, Idon, Doka and Iku-Gora-Ankwe (Blench n.d.: Northwest). No new data has been published since this group was set up, although a wordlist of Ikulu has been circulated (Moser 1982 and analysed in Seitz 1993) and Shimizu (1996) has posted a grammar sketch on the Internet. Recent interest in Èda [= Kadara] language has resulted in an unpublished dialect survey (Maikarfi 2004), a preliminary alphabet book and the launching of an alphabet chart in 2009. Kadara is correctly known as 'Èda' and there is a closely related lect, Èdra (which is presumably the source of the common Hausa name).¹² Two other lects for which information is recorded, Èjègha and Èhwa, correspond to Idon and the Iku-Gora-Ankwe clusters. They are so different from each other and from Èda that they clearly deserve separate language status. Zach Yoder (pers. comm.) has collected wordlists which show clearly that the language recorded in sources as Kuturmi consists of two distinct languages, Obiro and Ikryo. Clearly, Northwest Plateau remains a high priority for further research.

2.2.2 West-Central Plateau

West-Central Plateau consists of what used to be known as the 'Southern Zaria' languages. Published and manuscript sources include (Castelnau 1851; Koelle 1854; Gerhardt 1971, 1972/3b, 1983a, 1984, 1988b, 1992; Dihoff 1976; Adwiraah & Hagen 1983; Adwiraah 1989; Jockers 1982; Price 1989; McKinney, Carol 1979, 1983; McKinney, Norris 1984, 1990; Joy Follingstad 1991; Goroh 2000; Blench & Gya 2011; Carl Follingstad, n.d.; Blench & Kaze, in progress). Although these languages are clearly linked, no published evidence has supported their coherence as a group. Gerhardt (1983a: 95ff. and references in §1.5) argues that Hyamic [Jaba], Gyongic [Kagoma] and Koro should be treated as a subgroup of Plateau 2 (here West-Central).

Given that detailed reconstruction work has yet to be undertaken, Figure 6 presents the known groups of West-Central Plateau as a flat array.

12 Thanks to Alex Maikarfi for making this data available.

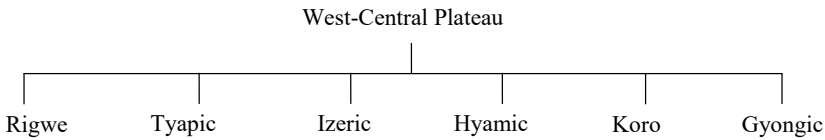


Figure 6. West-Central Plateau subgroups

It should be emphasised that future research may provide greater clarification of these relationships. Gerhardt (1994a) argued for a specific linkage between North (as represented by (i)Kulu) and West Plateau (excluding the Eggon cluster). The languages Nandu [=Ndun] and Tari [=Shakara] are listed in Crozier & Blench (1992) as part of this group. This is erroneous; Ndun-Shakara, together with the newly discovered Nyeng, form their own group, Ndunic (§2.6). The West-Central Plateau languages are a coherent geographical clustering and undoubtedly show numerous links with one another, but their genetic unity is unproven. Gerhardt (1983a: 67 ff.) presents a long comparative wordlist showing cognates between Rigwe, Izere and Tyap. However, with both new insights into the phonology of these languages (notably Follingstad 1991 for Tyap; Blench & Gya 2011 for Rigwe), and in particular the large number of lects still unrecorded at that period, a new comparative analysis is still to be undertaken. The groups that may be linked are as follows:

Rigwe (=Irigwe)

Rigwe is a single language branch of West-Central Plateau. The basic phonology and orthography is described in Anonymous (2006) and the pronominal system in Blench & Gya (2011). Unpublished sketches of different aspects of Rigwe grammar are published on the internet (Blench n.d.: Rigwe page) and work is underway on a substantial dictionary of Rigwe.

Izere cluster (Northwest Izere, northeast Izere, Cèn, Ganàng) and the isolated Fəràn language

The Izere language spoken in Fobur has been the subject of several unpublished analyses and has an orthography and a translation of the New Testament. It is divided into seven dialects, some of which are very distinct from the Fobur variety. A draft dictionary and sketches of several aspects of the grammar have been published on the internet (Blench n.d.: Izere page).

Tyapic (Tyap, Gworok, Atakar, Kacicere, Sholyo, and Kafancan) and Jju

The Tyapic languages are spoken in a series of villages around Zangon Kataf and Kagoro in Southern Kaduna State. Jju is centred on Zonkwa and it is usual to list it separately from the Tyap cluster but this seems increasingly to reflect ethnic separation rather than linguistic reality. Tyap (previously known as Kataf) has been studied by Joy Follingstad (1991) and a New Testament published. Jju (previously known as Kaje) was studied by the McKinneys (McKinney, Carol 1979, 1983; McKinney, Norris 1984, 1990) and an official orthography was devised by Daniel Hyuwa (1982, 1986).

Hyamic

The Hyamic languages (also known in the literature by the now discarded name ‘Jaba’) are spoken around Kwoi, southwards to Nok, the site of the fanour ‘Nok culture’. The people are known as Ham and the language Hyam, which is why the spelling alternates in published sources. Apart from Hyam of Kwoi, these languages remain very poorly known (see Jockers 1982). The unpublished doctoral thesis of Dihoff (1976) provides sketches of the grammar of Cori. In recent times, Hyam of Nok has become widely understood as a *lingua franca* in the larger Hyam community. James (1997) is a political and cultural history of the Ham communities that makes use of language data, although his survey materials are too incomplete to draw any final conclusions. Crozier & Blench (1992) list members of Hyamic as follows:

Cori

Hyam cluster (incl. Kwyeny, Yaata, Sait, Dzar, Hyam of Nok)

Shamang

Zhire

It now seems likely that the Hyam cluster consists of only Hyam of Nok, Sait, Dzar, while Yaata and the language of Ankun are also probably distinct, although proof is lacking.

The Shang language (Blench 2010), spoken in the village of Kuschemfa, south of Kurmin Jibrin on the Kubacha road should be added to Hyamic. This language appears to be spoken by a migrant group of Zhire who have come under heavy Koro cultural influence. Their language, while lexically Hyamic, has a nominal affix system resembling Tinor and similar Koro languages.

Koro cluster

The Koro cluster consists of five languages spoken west of Kwoi and northeast of Abuja (Blench n.d.: Koro page). Preliminary material on the Koro cluster appears in Gerhardt (1972/3b, 1983a). The Koro cluster has been intensively researched in 2008–2019 by an SIL International survey team independently of the present author as a basis for a series of translation projects.

Much of this information is unpublished, but the membership of the Koro cluster appears to be as follows:

Za (Ashe and Tinɔr [= Waci-Myamya])

Idū [Lungu]-Gwara

Nyankpa [Yeskwa]-Barde

If this terminology seems confusing, it is because the situation is in flux. Names in square brackets are former reference terms found in the literature. It appears that the Za groups had no name for themselves other than the word for ‘people’. Za [Ejar] is a recently adopted term to cover two languages, Ashe and Tinɔr. The Tinɔr have now formally adopted the name ‘Waci’. Gwara is a previously unreported language uncovered as part of fieldwork by the author. Barde is locally considered a ‘dialect’ of Nyankpa, but is sufficiently distinct not to be mutually intelligible. This is represented in Figure 7:

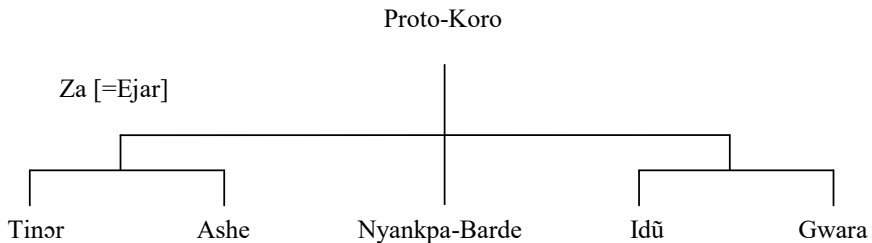


Figure 7. Classification of the Koro languages

Gyongic (Gyong, Angan)

The Gyongic group consists of two languages spoken around Fadan Kagoma between Kafanchan and Kwoi. Material on the Gyong [Kagoma] language appears in Gerhardt (1983a) and Hagen (1988). An unpublished wordlist of Angan [Kamanton] suggests that it is related to Gyong, but not closely.

2.3 Beromic

The term ‘Beromic’ has been adopted here to cover former Plateau 3 languages. Beromic now consists of Berom, Iten and two other languages, Cara and Shall-Zwall, unknown to Greenberg (1963). The principal publications on Berom are Bouquiaux (1970, 2001), and on Iten, Bouquiaux (1964). Recent unpublished or in press materials on Berom are (Blench et al. ined.) and on Iten, Blench & Dang (ined.). Cara (Teriya) was reported in a mimeo paper by Shimizu (1975b) who first proposed a link with Berom. Hoffman (1978) expressed doubts about hypothesised affiliation of Iten to Berom and noted that it seemed to be closer to the Central Plateau languages with which it has borders (especially Sholyo). However, much expanded datasets on these languages confirm the links between Berom and Iten. Shall and Zwall are two small, closely related languages in Bauchi State, far from the other Beromic languages. They were previously classified with the Ninzic languages (Greenberg’s Plateau 4), but are better placed with Beromic. Blench (2007a) describes Dyarim, a previously unreported Chadic language that is part of the South Bauchi group. Although Dyarim has no border with any Beromic language today, evidence from borrowings from Beromic suggests that related languages were formerly present in the region between Berom proper and Shall-Zwall.

Berom itself has a complex internal structure shown in Figure 9:



Figure 8. Berom dictionary workshop. Jos, Apr. 2009. Source: author.

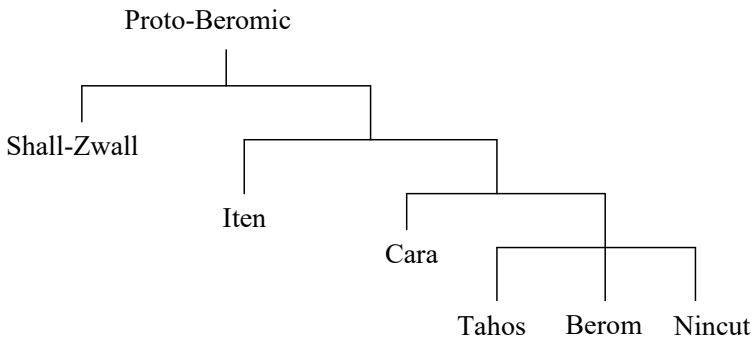


Figure 9. Internal structure of Beromic languages

Bouquiaux (1970; 2001) essentially describes the Du dialect, part of Central Berom, which is centred on Vwang (Vom) and Ryom (Riyom). However, the main dialect used for literacy and Bible translation is the Eastern dialect, roughly centred on Foron, spoken by only a minority. The other minority dialect is Rim, south and east of the main centres. There are two other languages within the larger Berom group, Tahos and Nincut. Tahos is a single village close to the Iten on the southern limits of Berom, and although locally considered a Berom dialect, is sufficiently lexically divergent to be treated as a distinct language. Nincut, known as Aboro, is geographically separate from the other Berom languages, and is spoken in several settlements along the road west of Fadan Karshi.

2.4 Ninzic

Ninzic, formerly Plateau 4, is probably the most difficult group to characterise and weak data on several languages make it unclear whether certain peripheral languages really belong to it. The name Ninzic is introduced here, reflecting the element *nin-*, which is part of many ethnonyms. The membership of Ninzic has changed quite significantly between various publications (Table 3).¹³

Descriptive materials on Ninzic are sparse.¹⁴ General overviews can be found in Gerhardt (1972/3a, 1883a) and materials on specific

¹³ Key: Blank = not listed, + = assigned to group, - = assigned to another group, ? as in source

¹⁴ Lexical field data on all the Ninzic languages can be found on the author's website, which provide justification for the classification presented here (Blench n.d.: Ninzic page).

Table 3. Changing composition of the Ninzic language group

Author	Green- berg (1963)	Hansford et al. (1976)	Gerhardt (1989)	Crozier & Blench (1992)	This paper
Name in Source	Plateau 4	Eastern Plateau group	South- western subgroup cluster a	South- western subgroup cluster 1	Ninzic
Ce [= Rukuba]	+	+	+	+	+
Ninzo [= Ninzam]	+	+	+	+	+
Mada	+	+	+	+	+
Nko					?
Katanza					?
Bu-Niṅkada		–	–	–	+
Ayu	+	+	+	?	?
Nungu		–	–	–	+
Ninkyob [= Kanin- kwom]	+	+	+	+	+
Anib = Kanufi		+	+	+	+
Nindem		+	+	+	+
Gwantu cluster		+	+	+	+
Ningye					+
Ninka					+
Kwanka- Boi-Bijim- Legeri		+	+	+	–
Shall-Zwall		+		?	–
Pe [= Pai]		–	+	–	–

languages in Hoffmann (1976), Hörner (1980), Price (1989), Ninzo Language Project Committee (1999), Wilson (2003) and Blench & Kato (in progress). The most difficult language to classify is Ayu, because it has clearly come under influence from many language groups, notably Berom and Rindre. Even though a substantial word-list is now available, its exact affiliation is unclear. The Kwaŋ cluster is now known to be a member of Tarokoid (§2.1).

2.5 Alumeric

One group of Plateau languages spoken in Central Nigeria has effectively no published data.¹⁵ These languages are: Hasha [=Yashi], Sambe, Alumu-Təsu and Toro [=Turkwam]. Except for Sambe, they have apparently been classified in previous lists on the basis of geographical proximity. Sambe is now presumably extinct, with only two speakers over 90 in 2005, while the rest have at most a few hundred speakers. A language called Akpondu, with only a couple of ‘rememberers’ in 2005 seems to have been closely related to Alumu. The group is here named Alumeric, after the language with the most speakers, but this term can be regarded as provisional. The Alumeric languages are now scattered geographically, and isolated among the Ninzic (=Plateau 4) languages. The internal structure for the group is shown in Figure 10:

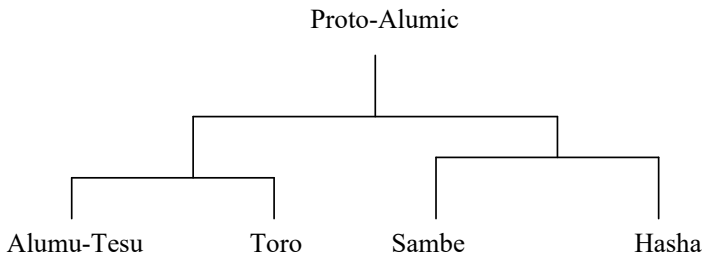


Figure 10. Internal structure of the Alumeric group

The very different sociolinguistic histories of Alumeric languages may explain their striking morphological diversity. There is considerable variability, with Alumu-Təsu and Toro having completely lost their nominal affix system and Hasha having developed a highly idiosyncratic system of reduplicating the first syllable of the stem to mark

¹⁵ Lexical data can be found at (Blench n.d.: Alumeric page).

number or plurality¹⁶ in both nouns and verbs. This is apparently the influence of a neighbouring Chadic language, Sha. Sambe no longer has a functioning nominal prefix system, but its nouns all have transparent fossil prefixes.

The relation between Alumu-Təsu and Toro is so far unclear. Toro has many lexical items identical to Alumu, as well as cognates that are highly divergent. This suggests that the languages are indeed related at a deeper level but that Toro came under influence from Alumu-Təsu in the more recent past.

2.6 Ndunic

Ndunic is a new name proposed here for the languages previously called ‘Nandu-Tari’. Existing sources list two languages, but a third language, Ningon, was first recorded in 2003.¹⁷ These languages were previously listed under West-Central Plateau (see §2.2), although on what basis is hard to determine. Maddieson (1972) had access to orthographic lists of these languages and his unpublished classification lists them as an independent branch of Plateau. The nomenclature of the three languages is shown in Table 4.

Ndun is the largest language of the group, hence the proposed name, but the three groups are independent of one another. The Ndunic people have recently adopted the name ‘Ahwai’ as a cover term for all three languages (Rueck p.c.).

¹⁶ Plural verbs, marking iterative or plural subjects and objects are a defining typological feature of Plateau languages.

¹⁷ Lexical data can be found at (Blench n.d.: Ndunic page).

Table 4. Ndunic languages: nomenclature

Common name	'one person'	'many people'	'language'	Proposed name	Comment
Nandu	<i>amer andün</i>	<i>bener andün</i>	<i>indün</i>	Ndun	The common element to these is <i>-ndun</i> and it is therefore proposed that the reference name 'Ndun' be introduced.
Ningon	<i>anyen</i>	<i>banyen</i>	<i>hanyen</i>	Nyeng	Ningon does not appear in any reference book although it is in local use. It is therefore proposed that the reference name 'Nyeng' be introduced.
Tari	<i>kiɣákára</i>	<i>úɣákára</i>	<i>ɣákára</i>	Shakara	The common element to these is <i>-ákára</i> and it is therefore proposed that the reference name 'Shakara' be introduced.

2.7 South Plateau

South Plateau is named for two language groups, Jilic and Eggonic, which are here put together for the first time.¹⁸ Except for Eggon these languages were unknown to Greenberg. Southern was applied to Jilic alone in Crozier & Blench (1992). Figure 11 shows this new proposal.

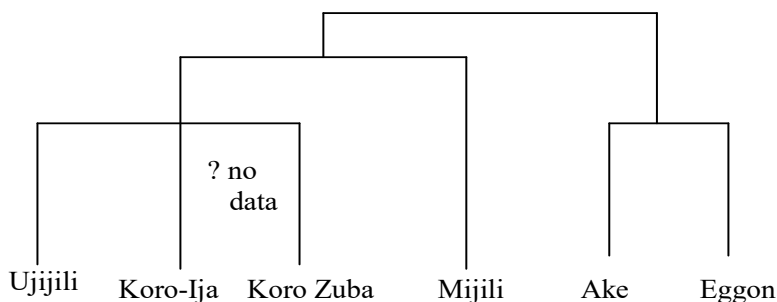


Figure 11. Classification of the Jilic-Eggonic languages

2.7.1 Jilic

Jilic consists of at least two languages, Mijili [=Koro of Lafia] and Ujjili [=Koro Huntu] now separated by a considerable geographic distance, but clearly related. There is a microfiched grammar and phonology of Mijili by Stofberg (1978a,b), while Ujjili is known from an unpublished wordlist. Koro Ija and Koro Zuba, two languages spoken northwest of Abuja, are said to be nearly intelligible with Ujjili, although no language data exists to demonstrate this.

2.7.2 Eggonic

Eggonic consists of just two languages, Eggon and Ake. These have previously been put together with Ninzic, although this is more a supposition from geography than relatedness proper. The Eggon people are numerous and the Eggon language is divided into many dialects, while Ake (=Aike) is spoken in only three villages. Eggon has a full system of nominal morphology, while Ake has lost its noun class system. Although the languages share enough common glosses to be put together, they are not close.

¹⁸ See data at (Blench n.d.: South page).

2.8 East Plateau

The three languages within East Plateau (=Greenberg's Plateau 6), Fyem, Bo-Rukul [=Mabo-Barkul] and Horom were placed together in the BCCW. This group has previously been named Southeastern (e.g. in Crozier & Blench 1992) but is here named 'East' as a better reflection of its location in relation to the Plateau centre of gravity. Nettle (1998a) is a sketch grammar of Fyem, and Nettle (1998b) includes short wordlists of all three languages, but Bo-Rukul and Horom remain virtually unknown (although see Blench 2003 for their relation with the Ron (Chadic) languages). Fyem and Horom are closely related, but the position of Bo-Rukul is more problematic.¹⁹ Figure 12 shows this structure:

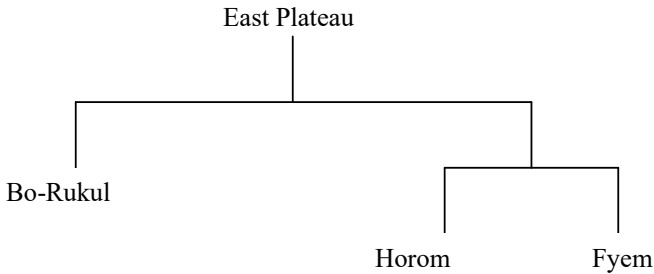


Figure 12. Structure of East Plateau

2.9 Eloyi

The Eloyi or Afo language is spoken in about twenty villages in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The principle sources on the language are Mackay (1964) and Armstrong (1964, 1983, 1984). The classification of Eloyi has been disputed, all the more because the lexical database for comparison is weak.²⁰ All the preliminary sources classified Eloyi as Plateau 2, i.e. together with Izere, Tyap etc. (e.g. Greenberg 1963; Williamson & Shimizu 1968; De Wolf 1971). Although Armstrong (1955) first suggested a link with Idomoid it was not until Armstrong (1983) that he set out the case for this classification. However, in Armstrong's (1984: 29) final published discussion of the subject he expresses some doubts, concluding 'Eloyi does not now seem as close

¹⁹ Lexical data at (Blench n.d.: Southeast page).

²⁰ Lexical data at (Blench 2007b).

to Idoma as it did when only Varvil's list [i.e. that quoted in Mackay 1964] was available'. Eloyi has many lexical items that do not seem to relate to either Plateau or Idomoid, but it is most likely that the Idomoid cognates are loans reflecting long proximity to languages such as Alago.

3 Conclusion: a revised classification of Plateau

The subheadings in §2 implicitly present a view of Plateau that is significantly different from earlier publications. However, some groups are much better defined than others; the coherence of Northwest and West-Central are still uncertain. There is no new data for many languages, whereas some other subgroups are now supported by lengthy wordlists. As a consequence, the status of these groups remains in flux. This will be amended as the Comparative Plateau Project continues.

Subgrouping at present is nearly all based on lexical and morphological data. De Wolf (1971) claimed that the nominal affix system of Plateau could be reconstructed and that there were regular correspondences with Bantu noun class prefixes. Blench (2018) shows that the Plateau affixes have eroded and been rebuilt many times and even reconstructing the proto-Plateau system is not possible. Similarities to Bantu reflect the Benue-Congo affiliation of Plateau, in other words it is in some ways ancestral to Bantu. Similarly, verbs, their extensions and plural forms can be borrowed as a package, resulting, for example, in spurious similarities between Izere and Berom. Convincing phonological innovations defining groups are difficult to establish and indeed the apparent widespread borrowing of distinctive sounds, such as the retroflex /ɽ/ of many languages in the Akwanga area, may make this problematic. The syntax of Plateau languages is still poorly known and few generalisations can be made. With these caveats, Figure 13 presents a new view of Plateau. This is clearly not final, as there are too many co-ordinate branches and too little internal structure. But until further analysis is undertaken, provisional versions of Plateau which do not promote too many unwarranted assumptions are the best that can be produced.

Plateau languages are a major grouping in terms of global language families that have been ignored for reasons that have little to do with their importance or accessibility. Whether this observation

will do anything to stimulate new research in the current climate is doubtful, but it remains a priority to leave a record for future generations.

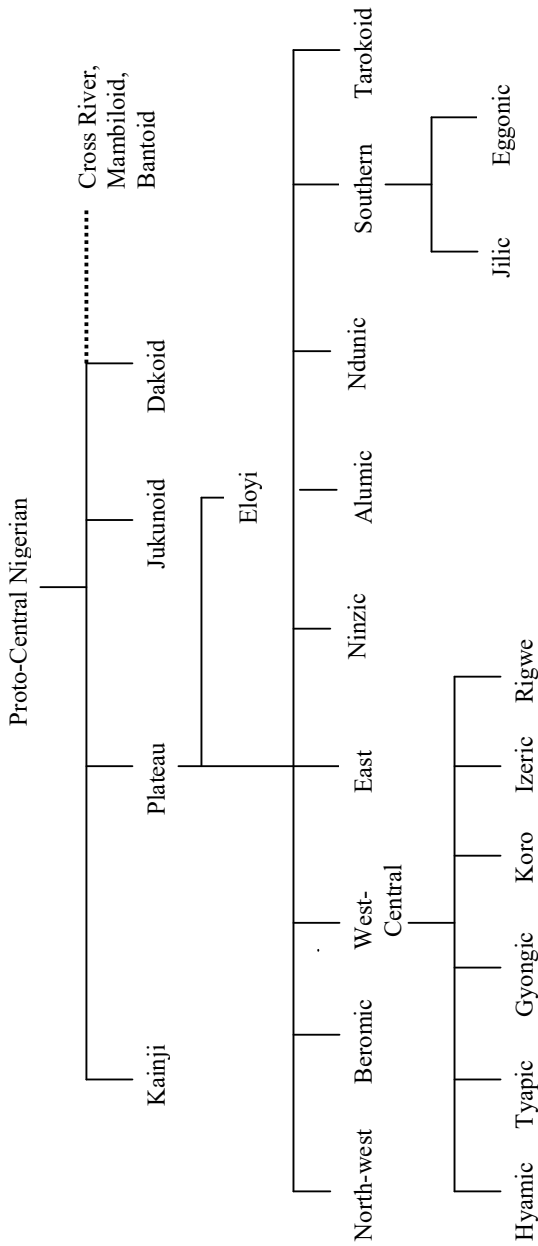


Figure 13. Central Nigerian languages: proposed classification

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Appendix I. Dictionaries in progress

Berom	Roger Blench, Yusufu Pwol (†), Hanni Kuhn and Barnabas Dusu (†)
Eggon	Roger Blench
Iten	Roger Blench & Deme Dang
Izere	Roger Blench & Bitrus Kaze
Mada	Roger Blench & Barau Kato (†)
Rigwe	Daniel Gya & Roger Blench
Tarok	Selbut Longtau and Roger Blench

Appendix II: Examples of roots common to Plateau languages

Lexical roots which define Plateau languages in relation to other branches of Benue-Congo are quite rare. Most common roots also have cognates outside Plateau, especially in Kainji and Jukunoid. However, two roots have been identified that seem to define Plateau. These are:

‘smoke’

Language	Form	Doubtfully cognate
Kulu	<i>ɪntfi</i>	
Berom	<i>(se) kyéŋ</i>	
Iten	<i>ɲkòy</i>	
Cara		<i>imveŋ</i>

‘smoke’

Language	Form	Doubtfully cognate
Shall	<i>ki</i>	
Rigwe	<i>ńtǫ́</i>	
Izere	<i>ítsin</i>	
Firan	<i>ìntsin</i>	
Ganang	<i>i-nseŋ</i>	
Ashe	<i>à-ǫ̀dò</i>	
Idū	<i>àzòdò</i>	
Tinɔr	<i>ɣàzù</i>	
Nyankpa	<i>úǫ̀dò</i>	
Hyam	<i>ǫ̀dòŋ</i>	
Ce	<i>ìntfi</i>	
Mada	<i>ntsàntsē</i>	
Ningye	<i>ntɛŋ</i>	
Gbantu	<i>ntsəŋ</i>	
Numana	<i>ntsin</i>	
Bu	<i>ɛntɛ</i>	
Təsu	<i>ń-zò</i>	
Toro		<i>muŋzu</i>
Hasha	<i>ifwe</i>	
Sambe	<i>ʃufwá</i>	
Ndun		<i>mesan</i>
Shakara		<i>manfu</i>
Eggon	<i>odzo</i>	
Jijili	<i>ŋʒɔ</i>	
Jili	<i>ńzɔ̄</i>	
Bo	<i>ifé</i>	
Horom	<i>ʃifeŋ</i>	

‘smoke’

Language	Form	Doubtfully cognate
Sur	<i>ngin</i>	
Pe	<i>ntsaj</i>	
Eloyi		<i>úwú</i> (< Idomoid)

Commentary: the proposed root formula is N.SV.N. Smoke is a mass noun so has no alternation with a plural prefix. The nasal prefix (which might be a reflex of Niger-Congo m- for mass nouns) is attested in most branches. The fricative in root initial position has numerous realisations, including /s/, /ʃ/, /z/, /ʒ/, /ɕ/, /ts/, /tʃ/. The stem vowel is usually a front vowel but alternates with a back vowel in some languages. The final nasal is usually the velar /ŋ/ but other the alveolar nasal is possible. The Alumatic and Ndunic forms appear to be cognate with one another and may well be reflexes of the main root, but the n ~ m correspondence is surprising. Shimizu’s (1980) Jukunoid proto-forms are **kyán*, **fu* and **vin*, none of which appear to be related.

‘hunger’

Language	sg.	pl.	Gloss
Kulu	<i>iyon</i>		
Berom	<i>vyon</i>		
Cara	<i>kivɔŋ</i>		
Rigwe	<i>ɲ¹-zò</i>		
Izere	<i>izòŋ</i>		
Gwot	<i>jòŋ</i>		
Tyap	<i>ddzòŋ</i>		
Ataka	<i>jjòŋ</i>		
Jju	<i>dzwoŋ</i>		
Ayu	<i>iyon</i>		
Mada	<i>gyòŋ</i>		starvation
Bu	<i>iyɔ̃</i>		

‘hunger’

Language	sg.	pl.	Gloss
Ce	<i>ì-wyo</i>		
Numana	<i>gyɔ̀n</i>		
Hasha	<i>i-yuŋ</i>		
Təsu	<i>nyu</i>		
Ndun	<i>ugóri</i>		
Shakara	<i>ugóri</i>	<i>igori</i>	
Fyem	<i>yón</i>		
Horom	<i>yɔŋɔ</i>		
Sur	<i>yyɔŋ</i>		
Tarok	<i>ayáŋ</i>		

Commentary: The forms with **g** in C₁ position probably point to a velar in this position, widely weakened in Plateau to labial palatal. If we assume the **gb** sometimes weakened to initial **b** this may then have been fricativised to **v**. Cara may then have lost palatalisation giving **v** in C₁ position. The table below imagines some pathways that could have allowed the diverse surface forms of C₁ to develop:

