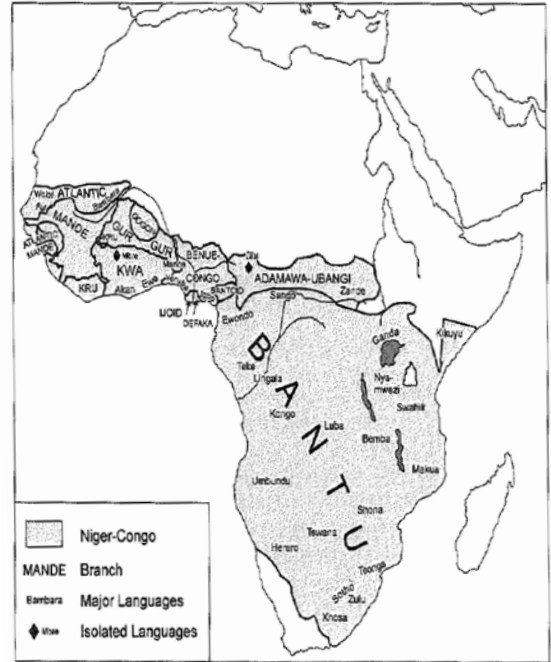


Kru revisited, Kru revealed

Lynell Marchese Zogbo

Welcome to the **KRU** (“crew”) language family

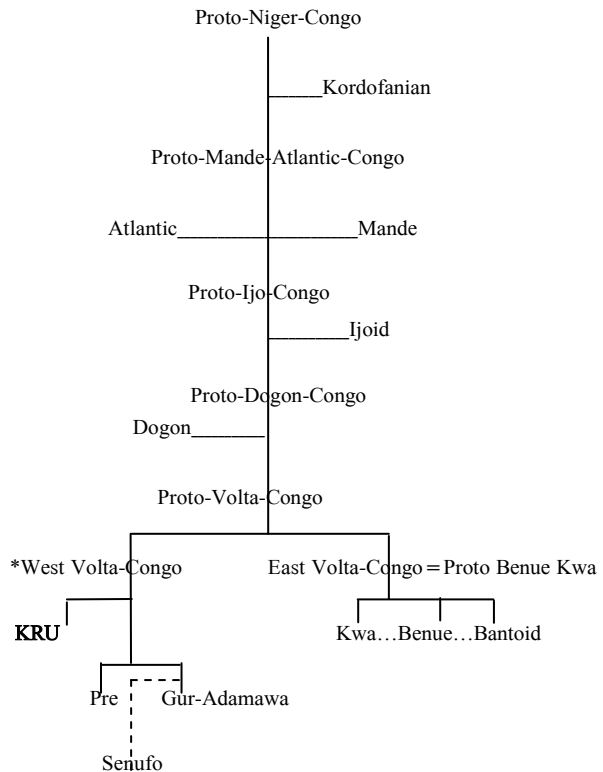
- Very small under 12 million speakers
- Limited to Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia, with Kru settlements Freetown → Ghana
- Past documentation rare (Koelle 1800’s, Delafosse 1904, Thomann 1906)
- Dense forest, no kings, no classes, no masks (at 1 pt!) endangered? Kru learn other langs, not reverse
- Recent surge in research from late 60’s til present:
 - published grammars: Thomann, Innes, G. Zogbo;
 - doctoral dissertations: Kokora, Grah, Egner, G. Zogbo, Saunders, Marchese, Thalmann;
 - UQAM group: Kaye, Koopman, et al.;
 - SIL research: Bentinck, Leidenfrost, etc.
 - ILA theses and publications
 - Kru Atlas 1979 and Tense/Aspect and the development of auxiliaries in Kru (1979)*
- standard Niger-Congo features: noun class remnants, verbal extensions, a *CVCV word structure, labio-velars and at least one implosive stop, ATR vowel harmony, nasalized vowels in one half of family, and three to four level tones, as well as common lexical roots



CLASSIFICATION Within Niger-Congo

- independent by Westermann and Bryan
- under Kwa by Greenberg (refuted by Welmers, Williamson)
- linked to Gur (Bennett and Sterk)
- Williamson and Blench (2000) have Kru under Proto Volta-Congo

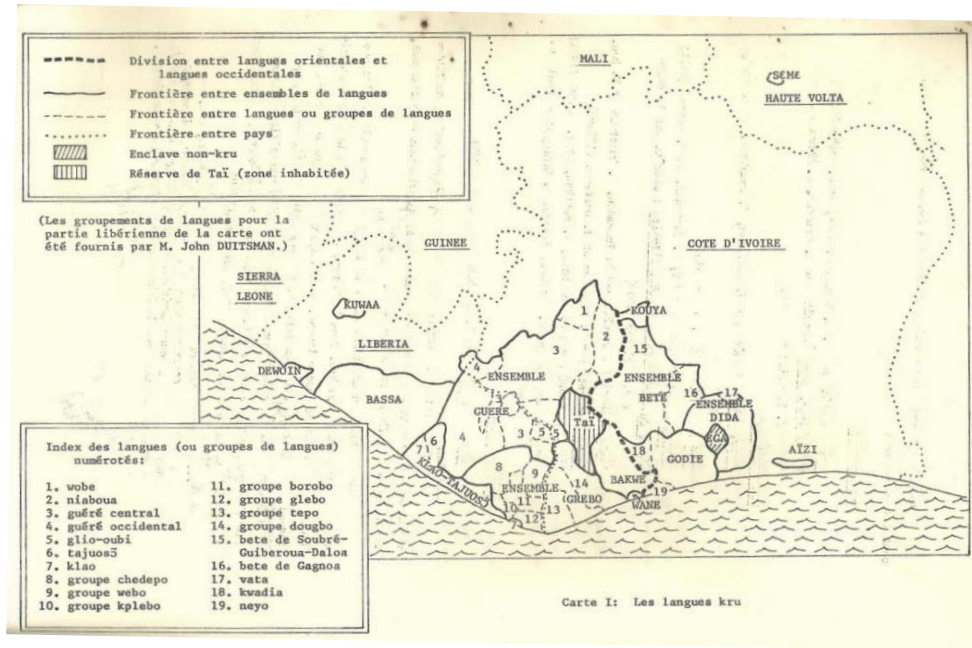
Needs a lot more work!
Compelling : noun class suffixes



Internal classification

Delafosse (1904) proposed division into two groups, Bakwé and Bété, now called **Western** and **Eastern**, divided by Sassandra river: There are several isolates:

- Kuwaa and Dewoin in Liberia (confirmed)
- Aizi in Côte d'Ivoire (confirmed)
- Sɛmɛ in Burkina Faso (not confirmed)



West-East division demonstrated by correspondences, isoglosses & phonological feature: nasalized V's

t : s	PWK *tu	PEK *su
'tree'	tū Nyabwa	sū Neyo
	tū Wobé	sū Godie
	tū Guéré	sū Dida Y
	tūgbè Tepo	sū Bete GU, Bete GB
	tū Klao	sū Kouya
	tūū Bakwe	
	cu Bassa *tu > cu.	

ɲ: ɳ	PWK *ɲ	PEK *ɳ
'name'	ɲlí Nyabwa	ɳlí Bete (D)
	ɲíní Wobé	ɳlí Dida (Y)
	ɲní Guere	ɳní Kouyo
	ɲné Klao	ɳɲ H Godié
	ɲrí Bakwe	

‘woman’		PWK *ɲ		PEK *ŋ
	ɲnó	Krahn (T)	ŋló	Neyo
	ɲruɣba	Tepo	ŋwló	Godie
	ɲnó	Guere	ŋló	Dida Y
	ɲnáákpū	Wobe	ŋ	Dida L
			ŋl̄	Bete
			ŋwnó	Kouya
			ŋl̄ú	Bakwé

Note that here Bakwe shows a Western form for ‘name’ and an Eastern one for ‘woman’.

gb: gw

‘dog		PWK *gbe M		PEK *gwi
	Nyabwa	gbē	Godie	gwe-yi
	Wobe	gbē	Dida	go-yi
	Guere	gbē	Bete GU	gwī
	Tepo	gbì	Bete GB	gwē
	Klao	gbè	Bete D	gwī
	Bassa	gbē	Kouya	gwī

Bakwé and Neyo show fricatives for this lexical item. Neyo has *vɪ* or *vɔ* M and Bakwe, *fɛ* L.

Numerous **isoglosses**:

	Western		Eastern	
‘fire’	PWK *nɛ		PEK *kosu	
	Nyabwa	nē	Neyo	kòsù
	Wobé	nē	Godie	kòsú
	Guere	nē	Dida (Y)	kòsù
	Tepo	nā	Bete-G	kòsù

‘tooth’	PW *nynt H		PKE *gle M	
	Nyabwa	ɲní	Neyo	grē
	Wobé	ɲní /nyntɛ	Godie	glē
	Guéré	ɲníè	Bete (GU)	glē-yì
	Tepo	ɲéē	Bete (GB)	glē
	Klao	ɲé	Bete (D)	glē-yī
	Bassa	ɲéné	Kouya	gla ¹
			Bakwé	glè

Questions: Eastern Neyo? Dida? border languages Bakwé, Kouya ; Western subgroup **Wè vs Kru** ;

¹ This is the plural of gle in many languages.

PROTO-PHONOLOGY

*CVCV-(C) V & probably *CVV ; current CLV and syncopated syllable types are derived

*Four level tones, with a few examples of 4 > 3, innovated modulated tones resulting from tone-consonant interaction and consonant voicing; tone carries a high functional load in the lexicon and in the grammar: distinguishing 1-2nd person (sg and pl), perfective-imperfective, negation

Proto Kru Initial consonants (Marchese unpublished, 1976)

current analysis

p b c g kp

p t k kp

b d j k gb

b d g gb

m n ɲ ng

ɓ l w

s

m n ? ?

z w

s

kw, gw derived from CVV

c, j, ny derived? g > j gie > jie

egg

l realized as flap l, r, n, d

???relationship bt l-d-dʒ

c, s > h in several Kru languages

*y

k > f, s > z z, s > f v? g > gh group of Bete

*ɓ	Ny	Wob	Guer	Tep	Bass	Bakw	Kouy	BeD	BeG	Godi	Ney	De
Leg	ɓū	ɓū	ɓū	ɓù	ɓo	ɓóú	ɓū		ɓu2	ɓō	ɓóó	ɓō

Two stages Proto Kru I (oldest) and Proto Kru II

Proto-Kru II ‘bush’ kwálá or kwlá < Proto Kru I **kúlá

‘moon’ *cu h < Proto Kru I **kí-ɔ (Kuwa: kewu)

‘dew’ *ɟlù < Proto Kru I **dilù

‘breast’ *ɲiti < Proto Kru I ?

n.....ng(w)w

‘mouth’ nē, ne Godie, Neyo ngwe Kouya, wɔn Klao, Bassa

ngo Bete D wɪ TepoKrumen

nguo Wobe, Guere wɔ Dewoin

‘hear’ nú Neyo, Godie, Dida ngwɔ Grebo wɔn Tepo, Klao, Bassa

nū Bete, Kouya

Compare Williamson and Bench (2000:41)

***Western Sudan**

Kordonfanian

***Proto-Kru**

#nu, ‘hear’

-eenu ‘ear’

*nú? ‘hear’

#nu, -nua ‘mouth’ *uungu

*nV? ‘mouth’

VOWELS

Proto Kru oral vowels

ɪ ʊ
 e o
 ε ɔ
 a

PWK Nasalized

ɪn ʊn
 εn ɔn
 an

***vowel harmony** everywhere: **retracted** but some + height

*predictable nasalization after nasal C or N dropping

*divide: **nasalized Vs in West**, almost none in East; all nasalized V’s except e & o

Western (nasalized vowels)

	Nyabwa	Wobe	Guere	Klao	Bassa
Tail	ɡʊn M	ɡʊn M	ɡʊn M	wɔn M	vɔn M
Arm	sʊn M	sʊn M	sʊn M	sɔn M	
Two	sɔn H	sɔn H	sɔn H	sɔn H	sɔn H

Eastern (oral vowels)

	Neyo	Godie	Dida	BeteGGB	Koouya
tail	ɡʊ	ɡo M	ɡo M	ɡo-yì	
Arm	sɔ	sɔ		sɔ	sɔ
Two	sɔ H	sɔ H	mɔsɔ BH	sɔ	sɔ H

Complementary distribution in Western Kru

Klao (Singler): voiced stops and oral Vs /dan/ [nan] MH ‘drink’ vs /da/ ‘call’MH, never [dan], never [ma], but distinction with voiceless stops: *pi* ‘cook’ *pin* M ‘load (on head)’

Did Proto-Kru have nasalized V’s or not? If so, what triggered de-nasalization in Eastern Kru?

Positing proto nasalized vowels and no nasal consonants (Le Saout, Bole-Richard, Vydrine for Mande) doesn’t work for East Kru. Could Kru have borrowed nasalized vowels from Mande??

Central vowels : innovated in Eastern Kru (Bete, Godie) but not in Dida and Neyo:

i	ĩ	U
ɪ	ɨ	ʊ
e	ɛ	O
ε	ʌ	ɔ
	a	

Bakwé has central vowels, is it genetic or areal? Why this innovation? SMande = central V’s

Note weird fact: where central vowels occur, there are no nasalized Vs!!!

PROTO-MORPHO-SYNTAX

- Currently **SVO**, but much **OV typology**:
-ɔ li sʉkʌ (SVO) → ɔ yi sʉkʌ li (S AUX O V)
‘he eats rice’ ‘he will eat rice’
-GEN N with or without associative***a** (alienable/inalienable) Nyabwa gbe á kpá bone of dog
-N Postposition
-OV noun compounding
- Kru is 100% **suffixing**: plurals in nouns & verbs (extensions: applic, passive, valency)
- No serial verbs but conjoined propositions with AUX sequential from ‘come’
- Comparison: expressed by *proto ‘pass’ construction: *X is good pass Y
- Topic-comment style with front shifted focus, affirmative focus particles within clause

TAM

Aspect dominates: **perfective and imperfective** reconstructed for Proto Kru with perfective basically an unmarked verb stem (but there is a pervasive low tone throughout the family).

Proto imperfective is the marked form, reconstructing to *NP a V-e (Marchese, 1982)

Which is older? Both persist. In some languages **a** has suffixed onto NP, producing an imperfective pronoun set. In others **a** is lost. In many languages **-e** reduces to mid tone. Did low perfective tone marking innovate to provide a clear distinction (dissimilation)? Did a proto tense marker get re-analyzed, then reduce to low tone (contra expectation tense > aspect)? There is a proto periphrastic progressive * he is-at bathe-place ‘he is bathing’.

Tense is secondary. Some evidence of recent and remote past tense suffixes: **#a** or **#i** ‘recent’ (Godie, Dewoin) and **#o/wo, wʌ** (remote). But extensive **tense innovation** derived from temporal adverbs most extensively in the **Kru cluster** (Klao, Cedepo, TepoKroumen, Bassa, etc). (See Marchese, 1984). The innovative tenses range from 1 to 5, highest in Grebo (Innes, 1969):

- (i) né dú blà. ‘I pounded rice’.
I pound rice
- (ii) né dú-**da**□ blà. ‘I pounded rice the day before yesterday’.
- (iii) né dú-**d**□ blà. ‘I pounded rice yesterday.’
- (iv) né dú-□□ blà. ‘I pounded rice today.’
- (v) né dú-**a**□ blà. ‘I will pound rice tomorrow.’
- (vi) né dú-**d**□□ blà ‘I will pound rice the day after tomorrow.’

Auxiliaries express future, potential, perfect, sequential, negation, relatively recent development and currently on-going : **SV (O)V-nom → S AUX (O) V**, (1986)

‘come’ → future, sequential, potential; ‘have’ → future, conditional, ‘bring’? → perfective, ‘stop’, let go’ NEG markers. True reanalysis : Aux: no perf-imperf, take obj & tense suffixes

NOUN CLASSES and AGREEMENT

Proto Kru words were made up of ***STEM + Class suffix**

Vestiges seen in:

- Pronoun systems 3rd person
- Singular + plural forms : regular and irregular
- In some languages, in definite markers
- Remnants of concord

Pronouns:

Primary distinction is human vs non human:

3rd singular with hierarchy human > big animals > everything else

	Human	Non-human
Kuwaa (isolate)	ɔ	ē
Niaboua (Wè)	ɔ̄	ē
Wobé (Wè)	ɔ̄	ē
Grebo (Kru cluster, W)	ɔ	ɛ
Djabo	ɔ	ɛ
Kouya (East)	ɔ	we
Tepo Kru (Kru cluster, W)	ɔ	ɛ, o, ɔ
Neyo (E)	ɔ	ɛ, a, v
Godié (E)	ɔ̄	ɛ, a, v
Bété (Daloa) (E)	ɔ́	ɛ, a, v ²
Dida (Yocoboué)	ɔ	ɛ, a, v

On the basis of these pronouns, we posit for 3rd singular human *ɔ and three non-human classes *ɛ, *a, *v. In many cases there are clear semantic categories which link to class markers and or remnants in other families. Currently, however, this system is **described phonologically** by all (Grah, Kaye, Marchese, Sauder, Saunders, Thalmann, Werle, Zogbo): in Eastern Kru, NHum words ending in front V's take **ɛ**, central Vs, **a**, back Vs, **v**, but final V reflects old noun class marker.

In Godié nouns ending in front vowels belong to the *ɛ big animal class (many taking **-a** in the plural):

mle	“animal”	Je	“antelope
luɛ	“elephant”	gle	“monky” (SP)

kaβε	“monkey”(SP)	tɛ	“snake”
gbale	“hippopotamus”	bɔɛ	“monkey”
βɛ	“buffalo”	gwε	“chimpanzee”
βaβɛ	“sheep”	βɛ	“antelope”
kpəkε	“crocodile”	ʝ	“panther”
dudvzve	“anteater”	βɫ	“cow”

Compare other families for the word ‘goat’³:

Yoruba	e-wúré
Efik	e-bot
Igbo	e-wu
Proto-bantu	ɪN-boli
Kordofanian	e-bonyi
Kru (Godié)	wuli-ε (definite form)

Godié nouns ending in back vowels take the *ʊ pronoun. Note liquids and mass.

liquids

ɲú	“water”
βɫ	“milk”
dɫ	“blood”
nv	“alcoholic drink”
zo	“soup”
bubv	“sweat”

natural elements

kòsu	“fire”
lagɔ	“sky, God”
dudv	“earth”
glv	“soil”
ylv	“sun”
cv	“moon, month”

non –solid masses

ʝɫ	“fog”
vuvɔɫ	“wind”
gbayɫ	“smoke”
βàβù	“dust”
nyɔmv	“air”
zùzv	“spirit, shadow”

miscellaneous (these take ɫ in plural)

wɫ	“head”
lv	“song”
βɫ	“road”
ylv	“day”

Compare PB 3/4 mu/mi , PBenue-Congo v/(t)ɪ, Togo Remnant *o/*i , the *o –prefix in Yoruba:

omi	“water”	ɔna	“road”	ɔβε	“soup”	orin	“ song”
ɔrun	“heaven”	oʃu	“moon”	ori	“head”		

The **a** class is not so definable, but includes food, instruments, small insects, etc. Examples from Godie : sɔkɫ ‘rice’, nɪmlə ‘bird’, nyidə ‘cooking pot’; Bete (G): ʝá ‘wound’, mla□ ‘nose’, zɪ□a□, ‘bird’.

Reconstruction of noun stems is difficult because the noun class V suffix has ‘taken its spot’:

*ní + v → nú ‘water’ *lu-ε ‘elephant’ *yVIV- v ‘sun’ nV + v ‘alcoholic drink’

Class concord or agreement is reflected across the family first and foremost in pronouns: subject, object, possessive, relative, interrogative, without overt reference in discourse.

Within the NP, concord marks various elements, depending on the language:

noun + adjective + demonstrative + number (definite floating)

Godie ðìtì kλdt HL nt sɔ ‘those two big houses’
 Nyukpɔ kλdɔ nɔ nii mlɛ kλdɛ. Nykpɔɔ -ɔ nii mlɛ nλ, ɔ kv ɔ ðutu kádɔ
 ‘man big DEM saw animal big Man-def REL saw animal SUB, he is-at his house big
 The big man saw a large animal’. . ‘The man who saw an animal is in his big house.’

Noun + Adjective + Demonstrative		Noun + definite
nyākɔɔ kλdɔ nɔ	‘this big (great) man’	nyākɔɔ + ɔ → LM ‘the man’
ðùtu kλdv nu	‘this big house’	li + ε → lie ‘the spear’
mlē kλdē nē	‘this big animal’	ðùtù + v → ðùtù ‘the house’
nmlə kλdā nā	‘this big bird’	
ðìtì kλdì nì	‘these big houses’	
nyākɔɔ kλdvā nuā	‘these big (great) men’	

The same agreement system exists in Bakwé, as seen in the following

Noun + adjective ‘only’ ⁴		
nyɔɔ	‘doolɔ	le seul homme
tatu	‘doolɔ	la seule porte
sape	‘deele	le seul poulet
‘kpata	‘döölä	la seule chaise

For adjectives, the situation varies greatly from language to language. Some agree with class and number as in Godie and Bakwe forms above, while some only agree in number. Where there is adjective class agreement, only a subset of adjectives agree, often the words ‘big’, ‘white’, ‘red’ and ‘new’. As the class agreement diminishes, plural agreement can remain. But note that for Tchien Krahn, Sauder reports the qualified nouns take the non-human plural marker⁵. True everywhere

nyɔ klábá ‘an important person/ man’ (big) nyv klàbɩ ‘important people’
 dɛ zɩ n ‘bad thing’ dt zɩn ‘bad things’ nyv zɩn ‘bad people’

Tepo Krumen⁶:

ya	ká	yɩ	kt	‘old pot/pots’
hru	pɛtú	hri	pɛtɩ	‘short road/roads’
yu	yrayɩ	yuó	yrayɩ	‘new child/children’

⁴ Examples from Csaba Leidenfrost.

⁵ Sauder, p. 46

⁶ Thalman. P. 251

The less the number of pronoun (class) distinctions, the less concord within the NP. The closer the element to the head noun, the more likelihood of agreement (no 1st, dem/def 2nd). The loss of agreement in adj works its way through the lexicon, class marked colors & plurals resisting.

Language	Dem	Adj1	Def	Adj2	Num	
Godié	X	x/10	X	x/4?	0	X = agreement present
Bété (Guibéroua)	X	X	X	X/?	0	
Neyo	X	X	X	X/?	0	0 = no agreement
Wobe	X	X/10	NR	x/1	0	
Kouya	0	X	NR	?	0	Adj 1 agree in number
Grebo	X	S	?	0	0	
Kuwaa	SG/PL	X/1	X	0		Adj 2 agree in class & number
KLao	0	X	0	0	0	
Dewoin	0	?	0	0	0	Definite seems innovative

- The Kru system shows important links to human, large animal, and liquid-mass classes in other NC languages.
- **It ‘respects’ their “membership” even including what appears to be unusual members!**
- It suggests that proto NC might have had less than more (noun classes)!
- The Kru system shows there are hierarchies of semantic categories in ‘reduction schemes’ with certain categories persisting: human over everything else, animate (?) over inanimate, big over little? Color over ?, Plural over class?
- **How and why do class and concord systems develop and why do they fade? Do any other NC language families show class agreement moving to phonological agreement?**

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