

Languages of Africa

Sources and notes for claims made. Credits for images, music, sfx, fonts.

Sources

General remarks

What a project! It took a while. Both because I was building out new tools to make this work and because it's a massive topic. Sources that opened the door to this linguistic world for me include the Routledge handbook edited by Agwuele & Bodomo, papers by Dimmendaal, Sands, Mufwene, Creissels, and others writing in English and French and, of course, the many fingers pointing to Greenberg. Kibebe's *Documentation and grammatical description of Chabu*, while focused on one language, is thorough and comparative enough that sections shaped my understanding of Nilo-Saharan. I frequented Glottolog and Ethnologue for different counts, classifications and the sources behind them. [This separate document](#) remembers voices that previously helped me understand African and African diaspora linguistics.

In my notes I use abbreviations like NC, NS, AA, AN for language groupings, a practice that leaks into this doc. Ok, on to my major claims following beats along the video timeline...

Specific claims

Maps. See sources for each family below as well as the image sources section. Many of the isolates and smaller families are based on Dimmendaal's "Linguistic isolates", which overlap with Blench and others. I focused on those I mention in the video. "Shabo" is here named Chabu following Kibebe. Luo, Kwa and other uncertain classifications typically included within NC and NS are lumped here, though separate blended paint colors represent Mande, Ubangian and Kordofanian or NC "Nuba languages", minus Kadu as NS/isolate. (See the dozen-member list synthesized in [Hombert and team's ANR project](#) "Contribution de la linguistique à l'histoire de l'Afrique Subsaharienne". In the article « La diversité culturelle de l'Afrique est menacée » Hombert calls on linguists to look for the "Basques of Africa" ("C'est pour cela que nous cherchons le ou les « basque » de l'Afrique.")

Number of languages in Africa. [Glottolog 4.3](#) lists 2,348 languages under the "Macro-area: Africa", 63 of which are filed under "bookkeeping", five under "speech register", two "artificial" and a little over 15 "unattested", leaving over 2200 by that

source's count. The same source lists over 7800 world languages, while Ethnologue (23rd edition) counts some 7100. In their introduction to *African Languages*, Heine and Nurse repeat Grimes, who in the mid 1990s "puts the number of African languages at 2,035" (1.1). Ethnologue lists over 40 languages for South Africa, well over a hundred for Chad and around 520 for Nigeria. The publication [also names Nigeria](#) as the country with the third highest count of languages, after Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

African languages. Here it's worth echoing the short section "Why African linguistics?" by Agwuele & Bodomo that ends their introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of African Linguistics*: "The choice of the adjectivizing term, African, ... is not to feed the evanescent othering of the continent and its people... [It] is mainly a geographical delimitation of the focus of the data being explicated". In an earlier section the harmful history of historical linguistics in the continent is made clearer: "the European ideology and methodology" led to a classification of languages and people "with a schema that not only othered the people but devalued them" (section "Study of African languages"). Examples of this are numerous, from leaving speakers of these languages out of their own histories to applying racial hierarchies in the research – see Salikoko Mufwene's "Race, racialism and the study of language evolution in America" and Pugach's contribution to the same Routledge handbook for a history of German academics writing on Africa's languages.

Geography. The widely quoted figure for Africa's land area is 30.3 million km², and for authors including Njenga the claim seems to trace back to 2007 World Factbook at cia.gov. Table 3 in the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook 2017* includes a column for the "surface area (km²)" of countries, where the figure for Canada is 9,984,670, for China it's 9,600,000 and Australia 7,692,024. The area repeated for Siberia in quite a few papers, including one by Moskvichev & Shokin from 2012, is "13.1 million" km². For more about Siberia, see [my video](#) and [sources doc](#).

Where and how. This video focuses on understanding Africa's languages, but close behind that story is a ride through the linguistics of classifying African languages, the highs of increased acceptance of Greenberg's phyla, and the lows of decades of criticizing, dissolving, untangling and reinforcing these large family proposals.

With families. The quote comes from the introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of African Languages* by Agwuele & Bodomo. Those same authors reference Ethnologue to count "2,144 living languages in the continent" from among "the world's 7,099 languages", but confusingly they also give the ratio as "13.4 percent" (section on the "Study of African languages" in the introduction).

Since ancient times. Indigeneity has a local and not always settled meaning in African contexts. Bunyi finds a "sociolinguistic situation" by contrasting indigeneity with colonization (3.1-3.2). Cultural Survival sees the [disadvantages suffered by](#)

[Indigenous African peoples](#) marked by their "mode of production" (hunter-gatherers or pastoralists) or by their "small numbers, remote locale, lack of representation in political structures, and the extreme threat to their lands and lifestyles" (Nmehielle's "Indigeneity in Africa").

Niger-Congo a fifth of all languages. Ethnologue 23rd edition counts 1542 Niger-Congo languages, the bulk of which (1444) fall under the Atlantic-Congo subgroup. Glottolog lists "Atlantic-Congo" but does not count the higher Niger-Congo unity. (Scroll up to an earlier paragraph for the denominators and down for my later remarks on unraveling families.) In Glottolog 4.3, Igbo and Yoruba are [Atlantic-Congo](#), while Hausa is Chadic. A wider Niger-Congo including other branches like Mande or non-Kadu "Kordofanian" is not accepted by Glottolog.

Careful with Kordofanian. Greenberg's *Languages of Africa* links all of Niger-Congo (including Mande, Ijo, Dogon) with all of Kordofanian (including Kadu). Greenberg's four proposals are echoed, with few changes, throughout this first section, so maybe this applies recursively up to the first half: careful with Greenberg; we'll come back to these classifications.

Bantu. Benue-Congo is a node in both [Glottolog](#) and [Ethnologue](#), with a "Bantoid" subgroup. Remarks about Swahili, Sidi, and L1 vs L2 speakers cut.

Noun classes. Note that this section is meant to apply to Niger-Congo, not just to Bantu. See Table 4 in Dimmendaal's "Areal diffusion versus genetic inheritance: an African perspective", which compares "Noun-class affixation", including position, petrification and agreement, across Niger-Congo nodes. "Bantoid" uses "prefixation" with agreement. Creissel's "Les systèmes de classes nominales des langues Niger-Congo" provides an overview of the noun class system, and the Setswana forms of the word "new" are from example 1. WALs chapter 31 gives interesting information on Guinean Fula's large suffixing system (24 classes!), but their sources are dated (Koval' 1979 and Arnett 1975) and I can't access them. The reconstructed Proto-Bantu singular *mùntù, plural *bàntù are listed in [Wiktionary](#) based on [Bantu Lexical Reconstructions 3](#) by Bastin et al. Compare PB reconstructions including Meussen's -ntu in [CBOLD](#).

Nilo-Saharan. Dimendaal Table 28.1 lists Songhai, Koman, Gumuz and "Mimi" each as an "isolate" and the others as "Nilo-Saharan". The rest of the article shows off diagnostic features and concludes that Nilo-Saharan research "is still in its infancy". Kibebe tells us that "Chabu is a tonal language, like its neighbouring Nilo-Saharan languages" (5.7). I claim that Kadu languages "sound Nilo-Saharan to some", but some sources suggest it's more like "to many". Blench's "Chabu and Kadu" agrees with Kibebe that "Kadu almost certainly **is** Nilo-Saharan" but that doubts remain about "Songhay, which if it is Nilo-Saharan, has indeed lost many of its characteristic features" (section 4). The far northern point on the map of NS is

documented by [Lameen Souag](#), quoted once before in the sources for African Romance.

Meroitic (remark cut). From Dimendaal's "Nilo-Saharan and its limits", chapter 28 in the *Oxford Handbook Languages of Africa*: "One of the languages not mentioned in Greenberg (1963), but added as a possible candidate for genetic affiliation with NS in Greenberg (1971), is the extinct language of the Meroitic kingdom in northern Sudan" (section 1).

Tonal languages. I skipped so much about tone here. Africa is often singled out as a [huge area where tones predominate](#). When contour tones occur, they often appear to be (as in Xhosa) one register tone immediately following another, or they otherwise yield to an underlying high-mid-low tonal analysis. However, exceptions are likely numerous, such as the Kru languages.

Afroasiatic. [Ethnologue's six classified nodes](#) for "Afro-Asiatic" match the branches shown in the video (though I use the name "Amazigh" instead of "Berber"), with Ongota listed as a seventh "unclassified" language within the family. Glottolog broadly agrees about five of the nodes but omits Omotic (which it breaks into multiple top-level groups) and leaves Ongota as its own isolate. For more, see the Omotic paragraph in my [sources for Ancient Egyptian](#).

Tone in Hausa and Afroasiatic. Frajzyngier's "Typological outline of the Afroasiatic phylum" in chapter 8 of *The Afroasiatic Languages* includes theories of tonogenesis vs original tone in 8.2.6. Ugwu and Ugwu summarize Hausa tone in "Towards contrasting tone in Igbo and Hausa language". A presentation by Rolle, Shih and Inkelas on "the Functional load of tone in Hausa" shares that "lexical tone" has a lower functional load than in Cantonese, and that Hausa gives a rather high role to grammatical tone. The appendix to Adwe's Hausa and English dictionary contrasts past-tense "tabbataɗ" and imperative "tàbbàtāɗ" for the verb "confirm" without objects (Appendix 2, v5). Nearby pages include examples like rìkē vs rìkē (held/hold!) or ciyaɗ vs cìyaɗ (fed/feed!). Note that I include tones and macrons in the Hausa orthography, which are not written in normal texts. Tone marking for past vs imperative must be well-known, since this is the same pattern I see selected in the presentation above.

Very old written Semitic languages. The manuscript shown here is in Ge'ez, an Ethiopian Semitic language. Early examples that reach beyond the continent include Akkadian, Ugaritic and Phoenician.

Malagasy. Glottolog lists 13 varieties of "Malagasic" (glottocode mala1537 in Glottolog 4.3). In "Malagasy dialects and the peopling of Madagascar", Serva et al. use Swadesh lists from 23 dialects to find a two-way split between the northeast and southwest of the island. There's a video out there [sharing greeting variations](#) around the island. [Glottolog](#) and [Ethnologue](#) both link Malagasy (or "Malagasic") to

southeast Barito languages, and today even Indonesian and Malagasy speakers find [a mutual warm familiarity](#) in their shared cognates.

Ahem, Khoe-San. Greenberg's 1963 classification in *Languages of Africa* divides the continent's languages into four "stocks", including "Khoisan". My spelling acknowledges the two terms used to group the various peoples and their languages – the "Khoekhoe" and the "Sān" – at linguistic extremes from each other in what will shortly be revealed as a language area, not a family. Showing and mentioning the surrounding Bantu click languages strongly hints at that upcoming reveal.

Five families, right? Greenberg's classifications leave out Malagasy, which brings me to a total of five historically established families. See Güldemann's takedown of Khoe-Sān below for more. These words aim at Greenberg, as did "pop linguistics" in the previous sentences at his legacy (remark cut). Taking the good (systematically approaching African languages with a sharp focus on linguistic data) with the bad (lumping all non-Bantu "click languages" together and sidelining evidence from within those languages' own histories), this video won't dunk on Greenberg or the five families. Instead, we'll march from a valley of complexity up to this simple view, then back down to a renewed appreciation.

Areal vs genealogical. Instead of "genetic", I used the term "genealogical" following Haspelmath's review, "How hopeless is genealogical linguistics, and how advanced is areal linguistics?" Mufwene argues that a critique of European creolistics and an understanding of language contact and populations will mean that "[g]enetic linguists" must "articulate more clearly what the Stammbaum stands for" (section 5 of "Creoles and pidgins").

Language areas. The areal circles roughly fit a couple examples from the North, Sudanic, Center, East, Rift, South areas carved by Clements & Rialland (maps 1 and 2 in Güldemann's "Areal typology in Africa"). Heine & Fehn display those broad areal divisions from Clements & Rialland in map 15.1 in "An areal view of Africa", cautioning that they "are primarily geographic and only secondarily linguistic in nature; they must be viewed as a first approximation to areal phonology" (15.2). The same authors also repeat the areal portrayal of West Africa as a "Macro-Sudan belt" from Güldemann (Map 15.2). Working with Christina Gwa'i, Festo Massani and other Gorwaa researchers, Harvey finds Gorwaa to fit at the center of a proposed language area (section 3.2 in "Gorwaa, Tanzania – language contexts").

West Africa. See the maps from Güldemann mentioned immediately above and Map 3 in Dimmendaal, "Areal diffusion vs genetic inheritance: an African perspective". This area covers "a large part of West Africa" and includes "Mande, Gur (Voltaic), and western Kwa languages" as well as "Songhai, a language usually classified as belonging to the Nilo-Saharan phylum" (Heine & Kuteva, "Convergence and divergence in the development of African languages", 2.1).

West African features (remarks cut). (From my notes: I'm disappointed to cut this! It's so interesting, but likely a detour.) Heine & Fehn show labio-velars across a "Macro-Sudan Belt" (map 15.2). "Contact" here is in direct recognition of "contact linguistics", which has even more to contribute about African creoles. Campbell emphasizes that borrowing is the only consistent phenomenon that defines areal studies in "Areal linguistics: a closer scrutiny", while Curnow's "What language features can be 'borrowed'" prefers the term "transfer". For changing tones to change grammatical meaning, see WALS feature 20A and map in chapter 20, which mentions "cases marked exclusively by tonal inflection, which so far has been found only in African marked nominative languages but apparently nowhere else in the world (König 2006, 2008))." For logophors, check out Curnow's "Three types of verbal logophoricity in African languages". For nasal vowels, read WALS chapter 10 and view the associated map. In "An areal view of Africa" 15.3, Heine & Fehn write paragraphs about other features, many of which apply to languages in the area.

West African writing systems. Unseth's "Invention of scripts in West Africa for ethnic revitalization" shares near the opening that "West Africa is unique, in that over a dozen scripts have been invented there in a relatively short time" (start of the second paragraph) and lists each script and its current status in Table 3.1. Even with a passing familiarity, I am not surprised to see Vai and N'ko rated as "established and viable" (table and section on "Viable scripts"), while among the rest only Mandombe rates as "showing some promise" (table and "Conclusion"). According to Welmers, "Vai is best known for its indigenous syllabic writing system, which dates from the early decades of the nineteenth century... which has understandably enthralled almost everyone who has had occasion to learn about it" (*Grammar of Vai*, second paragraph in the introduction).

Khoe, Kx'a, Tuu. Sands' presentation "'Khoisan' in and outside Southern Africa" breaks Greenberg's proposal into five families, with question marks around reconnecting two of them: Tuu vs Kx'a vs Khoe-Kwadi (and?) Sandawe vs Hadza. Compare "The five Khoisan lineages" in Witzlack-Makarevic & Nakagawa, Table 1 in the article quoted below. Kilian's "Tum?i: a phonetic & phonological analysis of a Khoisan variety" presents the very new case of Tum?i classification, repeating in Figure 3 the five distinct groupings given in 2012 by Güldemann & Loughnane, and proposing to classify Tum?i as Tuu. Dimendaal agrees with the link between Khoe-Kwadi and Sandawe: "Central Khoisan plus the extinct Kwadi language in Angola probably constitute a genetic unit with Sandawe in Tanzania"; however, Hadza has "no obvious relatives, probably constituting an isolate" (near the start of Dimmendaal's chapter on "Linguistic isolates").

Clicks as areal. The six click symbols are reproduced as listed in Table 6 near the conclusions of "The Kx'a family" by Heine & Honken, though refer to section 2.1 for a discussion of treating complex clicks as single units vs feature/segment sets. In the introduction to Güldemann's "Greenberg's 'case' for Khoisan: the morphological

evidence", the author charges that "[t]he weakest (though not the only disputable) of Greenberg's proposals for Africa has been the hypothesis of a Khoisan family that comprises all click languages other than from the Bantu and Cushitic families." The same author closes with criticism of Greenberg's contribution to pop linguistics: "the commonly prevailing perception of Khoisan by non-specialists, insofar as it is shaped by Greenberg's work, is misguided and should yield to a more balanced view" (conclusion). Despite prolonged contact, the families retain distinct features: "Compared to the predominantly isolating Tuu and Kx'a languages, Khoe languages have a larger amount of bound inflectional markers. A hallmark of the nominal and pronominal inflectional morphology of most Khoe languages is the so-called person-gender-number-markers commonly abbreviated as PGN's following Hagman (1977, 16)" (Witzlack-Makarevic & Nakagawa, "Linguistic features and typologies in languages commonly referred to as 'Khoisan'", 5.1).

Nilo-Saharan hypothesis and breakup. The dissertation by Kibebe, *Documentation and grammatical description of Chabu*, demonstrates that the language is not Nilo-Saharan. Kibebe's work convinced Blench, who previously classified the language as Nilo-Saharan, that "Chabu is an isolate" ("Chabu and Kadu" 2.3.7). In Bender's "Nilo-Saharan", chapter 3 in *African Languages*, section 3.1 is titled "The Nilo-Saharan languages: phylum or collection of unrelated groups?" and one of the first sentences warns us that "Of the four 'Greenberg phyla' (Greenberg (1963a)), Nilo-Saharan is probably the least widely accepted." (Those phyla are the five families from the first part of my video minus Austronesian.) The author later calls it "the proposed Nilo-Saharan phylum" (3.2.2). References to the family as a controversial "proposal" or "hypothesis" are common. To pick two examples, Starostin calls it "hypothetical" in "On Mimi", and in Blench's evaluation of "Greenberg's universal project" the author refers to "Nilo-Saharan hypothesis" as an innovative idea of Greenberg's and one "which continues to generate controversy" (section 2, above the isolates in Table 1).

Niger-Congo breakup. As mentioned above, for example, Ethnologue accepts the wider Niger-Congo group, while Glottolog classifies no groups higher than the Atlantic-Congo core. Versus Niger-Congo proposals that include them (as in Ethnologue), contrast Glottolog 4.3, which lists "Mande" and "Ijoid" as top-level groups.

Isolates and unclassified. Blench in "Greenberg's universal project" counts eight probable isolates but suspects that only six will turn out to be isolates (Table 1 and accompanying text), while Dimmendaal's list in "Linguistic isolates" is much longer (Table 13-1). As you can see in the first map in "Language ecology and linguistic diversity on the African continent", Dimmendaal is critical of many aspects of the traditional classifications, accepting much of Nilo-Saharan without Songhai and thinks that "Sandawe forms a genetic unit with Central Khoisan" (meaning Khoe-Kwadi) but departing from Greenberg on Eastern Niger-Congo, which

"probably constitutes an independent language family... now usually referred to as Ubangian." This serves as an example of how linguists aren't full-on "lumpers" or "splitters" but interpret evidence as motivating lumping in some cases and splitting in others.

Isolates or unknown because obviously unrelated. See Dimmendaal's table mentioned immediately above, which names "Bangi Me" and "Jalaa" alongside Hadza and others. "Laal" is also named there, with an earlier long paragraph about typological overlaps with its neighbors.

Isolates or unknown because of classification debates. Sources for the debated ties between Sandawe and Khoe-Kwadi were mentioned above. Savà gives us the sense that Ongota belongs to some family, but which one is debated: "Fleming et al. (1992-93) consider Ongota in itself a primary branch of Afroasiatic. According to Ehret (p.c.), Ongota represents a separate branch within South Omotic. Bender (p.c.) thinks that it is a hybridised Cushitic language. Aklilu Yilma (p.c.) proposes a process of creolization in morphology" (section 4 of "Ongota (Birale), a moribund language of southwest Ethiopia").

Isolates or unknown because of lack of good documentation. As for Mpra, the tongue "may either be a Niger-Congo isolate branch like the similarly named but unrelated Mbre language in Cote d'Ivoire or it may be an isolate language, such as Bangi Me in Mali. It is probably impossible to decide between these alternatives on the limited data available" (Blench on "Recovering data in Mpra", section 2). Sands lists "Mpra (Mpre)" in Ghana as an "under-documented" and "nearly extinct" tongue without a grammatical sketch ("The challenge of documenting Africa's least known languages" 2.4). Trapero's "Estudios sobre el guanche" opines that overcoming the so far clumsy attempts to connect Guanche words ("guanchismos") to Amazigh ("bereber") requires expertise rare in a single person: deep knowledge of the "materiales guanches", of "bereber", and of the Canary Island Spanish that left the surviving Guanche materials so heavily "españolizados" (chapter 12, sections 6-7).

Sign language isolates. Table 18.1 in Nyst's "Sign languages in West Africa" shows that many languages have their "Origin" listed as "Local", while most of the "Foreign" are "ASL based". More [examples from throughout the continent](#) are listed by Gallaudet. Shaw & Delaporte expand on the etymological connection between LSF and ASL in "New perspectives on the history of American Sign Language".

Indo-European and Semitic. These are two obvious and wide-ranging examples of "outsider" language groups (mainly Romance, Germanic and Arabic varieties) becoming local. I opted not to point back to it in the video, but for the curious case of Latin in North Africa, see my [animation](#) and [sources doc](#) about African Romance.

Former colonial Languages become local. Written in the 90s, Nyembwe's "Le français au Zaïre ou le français zaïrois" repeats Kilanga's three-step evolution of

Zaire French studies: "l'étape du français au Zaïre, l'étape du français du Zaïre et enfin l'étape du français zaïrois"; the third step is reflected in my translation "Zairian French". Since Nyembwe's paper, the term has become historical – the country is known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the adjective "congolais" is shared with the Republic of the Congo. Nigerian English is "an indigenised variety of English" according to the start of Alo and Mesthrie's "Nigerian English: morphology and syntax", and does not include the creole since "Nigerian scholars" talk about "pidgin... as an independent code." See Johanita Kirsten's chapter "Afrikaans" and book *Written Afrikaans since Standardization* for the role of Dutch and pidgin/creolization in the Cape Colony. While my sentence celebrates the languages becoming as local as any Indo-European variety, Msila's "'Mama does not speak that'" foregrounds the challenges of balancing the educational politics of schooling children in "colonial languages" like English alongside "African indigenous languages" like isiXhosa.

Creoles. I avoided talking about the origins of pidgins and creoles, with the exception of repeating the common claim that creoles were "lexified by" other languages. Creolists have contentious ideas about these subjects and a lot of ink to spill about each other in the process. (Read Bickerton and Mufwene back to back.) DeGraff evaluates five popular, old hypotheses about creoles in "Do creole languages constitute an exceptional typological class?" Against the notion that creole languages are inventions that layer European words on African structures, the author argues that while "African languages in the Caribbean did, at least to some degree, influence the shape of the emerging Creoles" and that "the Caribbean is rich in 'African survivals,' not only in grammatical patterns, but also in proverbs, tales, discourse styles, religious practices, music, dance, cuisine, etc.", there is no merit to the "exclusive and overarching constraints that strict-relexification scenarios impose on the structural make-up of Creole grammars" (section 5).

Not bad Arabic or bad Portuguese. Shown onscreen is the title of Mufwene's "Pidgins and creoles", quoted above in the paragraph about areal vs genealogical linguistics. Avram identifies "Juba Arabic" as "a pidgincreole" that is "spoken as a primary language by 47% of the population of Juba, the capital city of South Sudan" in "Arabic pidgins and creoles" (3.1) The short sentence "(fu)watá súkun", glossed "ground hot" and translated "It is hot", is example 12 in the same chapter. Lopes da Silva introduces the language in *O dialecto crioulo de Cabo Verde*, but my sentences come from an interview in Pardue's "Cape Verdean Kriolu as an epistemology of contact", where rappers use "four short phrases" familiar to "Cape Verdean youth in Lisbon": "Ami é Kriolu. É o sentimentu di movimentu kabuverdianu. É kel li. É a gerson di gosi." Mufwene uses the phrase "lexified by Portuguese" for Cape Verdean Kriolu in "The emergence of creoles and language change". Following Mufwene, I should add that they are lexified by nonstandard varieties of those languages. David Frank, a linguist with SIL who has done creole

fieldwork, collected [quotes from speakers](#) passing on criticism of and advocacy for their languages in "We don't speak a real language".

Linguistics of colonization, force and diaspora. "Former colonial languages" is an adequate phrase used by Kamwangamalu in "The issue of the medium of instruction in Africa as an 'inheritance situation'". Two map points indicate the examples of Portuguese (in Brazil) and then English (in the United States). I recognize the difficulties of labeling "colonial", "colonizer" and "European" languages, and the complexities hidden behind "creole" as a general term. Tirvassen shares how complicated the term can be when applied to Madagascar: "Mufwene (2002) posits that although the concept connotes a concentration of economic, political and military power, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the consequences of colonial rule ha[ve] never been uniform. For example, in the case of Madagascar and the Comoros Islands, there is no evidence to suggest that French authorities implemented their typical assimilationist ideology to turn African natives into 'French' people" ("Colonial languages': an appropriate lens to drive educational reforms?"). It is the goal of this small section to recognize former colonial languages as part of Africa's linguistic experience, including how Africans have shaped them. (Internally, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Naija and Nigerian English all exist.) The brief remarks about colonization, force and diaspora went through many rounds; the final version draws on a history of poetry about "the water(s)", as in this [speech from Long](#), where "the Atlantic world" becomes a symbol of "what the globe is, what language is, what meaning is and what human means ... and Africans were at the center of this."

Garifuna. Glottolog classifies the language as Arawakan. Garingau are introduced in "Agunbiraha wamutiñu iun hebelurun tumou baruwa garífuna : Nous vous invitons à entrer dans la nation garifuna", with some hints of understanding their identity, complex relations with colonists and their anti-slavery actions, but [here's a brief documentary](#) with words from Garifuna people themselves.

Creoles across the Atlantic. Haitian Creole and Papiamentu are among the most common reference languages in creolistics, and both are named early in Mufwene's "Pidgins and creoles". Defining "creole" and characterizing creole origins are tricky topics in the field; in that same piece Mufwene takes issue with the way creolistics does both.

No quintessential family, but many peoples. This is not to sideline pan-African experiences or common linguistic efforts. Ologunde laments that the native Yoruba language gets "treated as a stranger in its own home, while English is still considered the real language" (quoted in Adegaju's "Empowering African languages").

Outro. The [document shown at the end](#) shares much more about African and African diaspora language info. Thank you for reading my sources doc!

Images

Blank map of Africa borders modified from:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BlankMap-Africa.svg>

Glottolog Data Explorer project map (composed and edited from Caines et al.):

<https://cainesap.shinyapps.io/langmap/>

Baobab trees:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adansonia_grandidieri04.jpg

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adansonia_grandidieri_02.jpg

Benin savanna:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arbres_dans_la_savane.jpg

Old Nubian manuscript:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bishop_on_a_Old_Nubian_document.png

Benue River:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benue_10.38241E_8.69279N.jpg

Manuscript in Fidäl:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Goatskin_Book_on_Display_-_Entons_Church_Museum_-_Lake_Tana_-_Near_Bahir_Dar_-_Ethiopia_\(8680690938\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Goatskin_Book_on_Display_-_Entons_Church_Museum_-_Lake_Tana_-_Near_Bahir_Dar_-_Ethiopia_(8680690938).jpg)

Omo River:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Evening,_Omo_River,_Ethiopia_\(22615287108\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Evening,_Omo_River,_Ethiopia_(22615287108).jpg)

Photos in the waters around Madagascar:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Unique_Madagascar.jpg

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_travail_%C3%A0_Madagascar_06.jpg

Indonesia map composited from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia_blank_map.svg

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia_Blankmap.svg

Kalahari hunting techniques:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bushmen_in_the_Kalahari.jpg

King of Dahomey modified from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dahomey_and_the_Dahomans_being_the

[_journals of two missions to the king of Dahomey, and residence at his capital, in the year 1849 and 1850 \(IA bub_gb_ngLr7B6zBM8C\).pdf](#)

Vai script:

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/documents-showing-the-vai-script>

Giraffe:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giraffe-closeup-head.jpg>

Emoji:

<https://emojipedia.org/deaf-person-dark-skin-tone/>

<https://emojipedia.org/deaf-woman-dark-skin-tone/>

Galleon (used under the [Morguefile license](#)):

<https://morguefile.com/p/530520>

Painted dog:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_wild_dog_\(Lycaon_pictus_pictus\)_head.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_wild_dog_(Lycaon_pictus_pictus)_head.jpg)

Ganga Zumba, Quilombo resister:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Albert_Eckhout_painting.jpg

Lebna Dengel, Emperor of Ethiopia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cristofano_dell%E2%80%99Altissimo,_Portrait_of_Lebn%C3%A4-Dengel._c._1552-1568.jpg

Fonts

Most text is handwritten by me. Some lettering is derived from or digitally painted atop my normal fonts below.

Perspective Sans and Daniel by Daniel Midgley, CC BY - NoDerivs 3.0.

<http://goodreasonblog.com/fontery/>

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/3.0/>

Architect's Daughter by Kimberly Geswein, commercial use license purchased.

<http://www.kimberlygeswein.com/commercial-use/>

Alegreya by Juan Pablo del Peral, SIL Open Font License 1.1.

<https://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/alegreya>

JSL Ancient, JSL Ancient Italic, JSL Blackletter by Jeff Lee, custom license ("Permission is granted to freely distribute them, provided that they are distributed

unaltered").

<http://www.shipbrook.net/jeff/typograf.html>

Noto Sans used under SIL Open Font License 1.1.

<https://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/noto-sans>

Kelvinch by Paul Miller, SIL Open Font License 1.1.

<https://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/kelvinch>

Charis used under SIL Open Font License 1.1.

<http://software.sil.org/charis/>

Music

I created the intro and outro theme variations, plus the piece from Thoth's Pill that plays in the middle. The rest of the credit goes to Kevin MacLeod:

Infados, Silver Flame, Thinking Music

Kevin MacLeod (incompetech.com)

Licensed under Creative Commons: By Attribution 3.0 License

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Sound effects

I recorded the shooshes/hushes and the writing/chalk. Other sfx are from soundbible, pdsounds (currently available through [a backup](#)) and soundeffect-lab.

(from www.soundbible.com, www.pdsounds.org)

Woosh, Mark DiAngelo

Swoosh 1, man

Swooshing, man

Blop, Mark DiAngelo

Mouth pop, Cori Samuel

Wind Storm, Mark DiAngelo

Dragon Wheeze, Gregory Weir

Dull thud, Gregory Weir

Light wood piece, Stephan, pdsounds.org

Turning a page, John Rose

Page turn, planish

Old book noises, Cori, pdsounds.org

Books and paper, Stephan, pdsounds.org

River noise, Caroline Ford

Beach waves, Mike Koenig

Rustle, Caroline Ford
Sea waves, Mike Koenig

(from <http://en.soundeffect-lab.info>)

head-stroke1

page1

page2

firewood-put1