



Concord, classification & contact in Bāinouk

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Structure of the talk

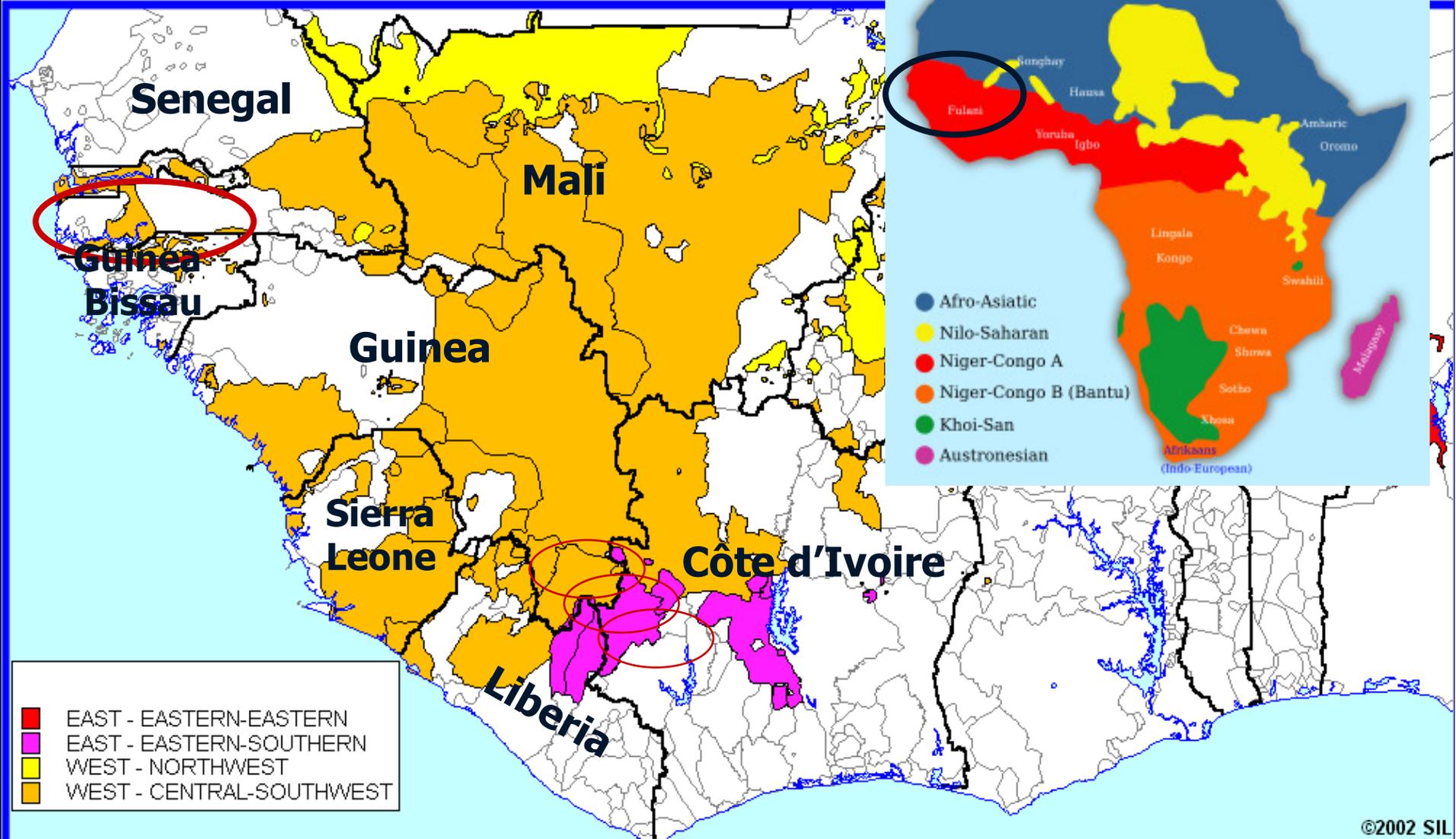
- Introduction to Bāinouk
- A funky phenomenon: literal alliterative concord (LAC)
- The importance of LAC for the nominal classification system of Bāinouk
- The role of contact for LAC and Bāinouk in general
- Outline of a research paradigm

Although the task focuses on a particular language, it is hoped that it will be of general relevance for the question of what knowledge to document in multilingual settings.

Introduction to Baïnouk



West Africa



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Casamance

- Casamance is a hotspot of linguistic diversity (and language endangerment) in Senegal.
- Around 20 languages are spoken in the area.
- Their number is likely to be downplayed because of lumping tendencies dominant so far.
- A civil war made research impossible in the past.



The Baïnouk

- Are the first known inhabitants of the Casamance region of Southern Senegal (de Lespinay 1987, 1996, Bühnen 1994)
- Occupy a number of isolated villages scattered throughout Casamance.
- Group their language into three main varieties, Gunyaamolo, Gubaher and Gujaher.
- Live in a complex multilingual context, where they speak between 3 and 6 languages on a daily basis.

Not the language, a way of life is threatened

- People don't give up Bainouk because of:
 - Multilingualism
 - Confinement of Bainouk to the oral sphere
 - The role of the official language French
 - Lack of transmission to children

The villages themselves are disappearing due to massive rural exodus, and with them the sole context of use of Bainouk. People adopt a different pattern of multilingualism in towns.c

Domains of multilingualism



At home: Bâinouk (and Wolof)





In the fields: Baïnouk, Joola, and Mandinka



On the way to town:
Joola, Mandinka,
Wolof and French



At the market:
Joola,
Mandinka,
Wolof, and
French

Writing:

Mainly in French



CERTIFICAT
d'Études d'Alphabétisation

Mission Évangélique
Niamone

Année 2003
No 12 Du Registre De Contrôle

Vu le procès-verbal et écrire de l'examen subit par OUSMAN DIATTA
Vu le certificat en date du 01/06/03 pour le session 2002-2003
attest que M. OUSMAN DIATTA né le 04/06/63
à Diengue a été jugé digne d'obtenir le Certificat d'Enseigner d'Alphabétisation
Délivré à M. OUSMAN DIATTA LE PRESENT CERTIFICAT D'ENSEIGNER d'Alphabétisation.

L'élève est capable d'enseigner une classe
d'alphabétisation parmi ceux de sa région.
Il est maintenant un instituteur qualifié.

Fait à Niamone le 30 Mai 2003

Signature de Directeur

John W. Van Ken
M. JOHN VAN KEN
DIRECTEUR
ÉCOLE D'ALPHABÉTISATION

... and to a very
limited extent in
Baïnouk



Far-reaching convergences due to contact I

Bainouk: sideeno

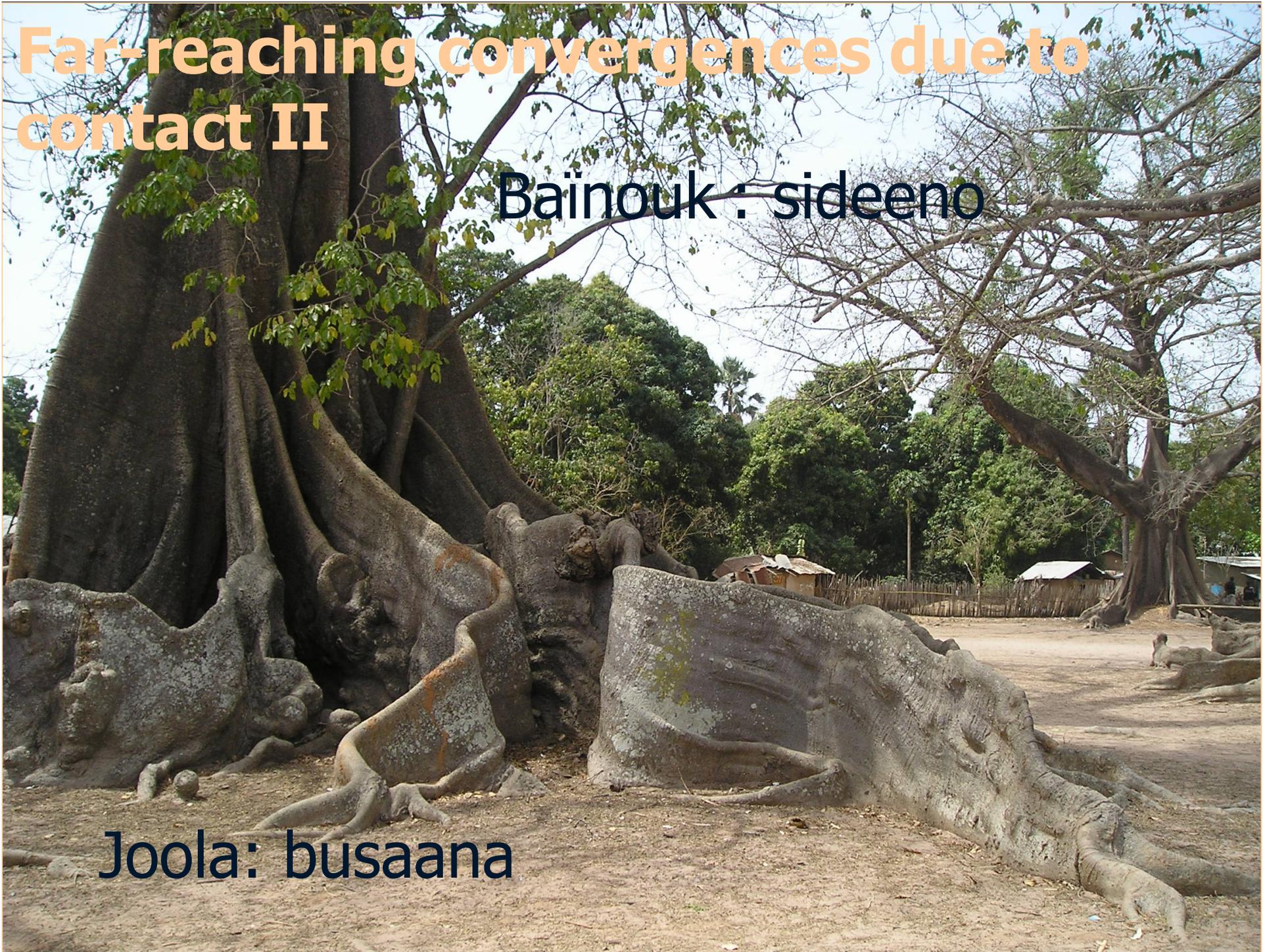
Joola: busaana



Far-reaching convergences due to contact II

Bainouk : sideeno

Joola: busaana



Literal alliterative concord (LAC) in Baïnouk



The Bāinouk noun class system

Prefix

Stem

Gloss

si-
mu-

`mango tree'
`mango trees'

bu-
di-

mango

`mango fruit'
`mango fruits'

ko-
ni-

Diminutive
prefix
replaces
other class
markers

`small mango'
`small mangos'

Ca. 20 classes are organised in singular-plural pairings typical for Atlantic and Niger-Congo languages. All eligible nouns combine with diminutive and augmentative class markers.

Prefixless nouns in Bāinouk

Prefix	Stem	Suffix	Gloss
∅			`goat'
	fajamen	-εη	`goats'
ko-			`small goat'
ko-		-εη	`small goats'

According to Sauvageot (1967), ca 30% of the nominal lexicon are prefixless nouns with a suffixed plural that only occur with diminutive and augmentative prefixes.

Concord (agreement) in Bāinouk

NC-stem-DEF

DEM-NC

si-nəŋ-ə

1n-s1

'this tree'

mʊ-nəŋ-ə

1m-mʊ

'these trees'

∅-fajamen-ə

1n-fa

'this goat'

ko-fajamen-ə

1n-kə

'this small goat'

Recall: fa is not a class marker
because it isn't replaced by the
diminutive marker ko.

A subset of prefixless nouns copies the first syllable
of the stem onto agreeing elements.

Literal alliterative concord (LAC) in Baïnouk

- LAC creates a potentially open set of noun class markers.
- LAC challenges theories that assume the principle of phonology-free syntax (cf. Zwicky 1969& Pullum 1986)
- LAC is cross-linguistically extremely rare and has only been postulated for less than a handful of languages, among them Bainouk (Dobrin 1995, Aronoff 1998)

However, LAC is not unconstrained. Only a subset prefixless nouns exhibits it, the others take the agreement suffixes $-n\text{ɔ}$ and $-V\eta\text{ɔ}$.

The role of contact in LAC



Hypothesis: prefixless nouns are loanwords

- According to Sauvageot (1967), the majority of prefixless nouns are loanwords, mainly from Mandinka, a Mande language without noun classes.
- He also claims that the suffixed definite marker (only in the Gunyaamolo variety of Bainouk) and plural are borrowed from Mandinka as well.

However, suffixed plurals are also attested in the related language Buy (Doneux 1991), which has been less in contact with Mandinka. Suffixed class markers are attested in several Atlantic languages alongside or instead of prefixes.

Prefixes that are not quite prefixes

fajamen > Joola e-jamen (Sg.)/si-jamen (Pl.)

Where does fa come from?

fe:bi 'goat' in Bainouk Gubaher and archaic form in Gunyaamolo

fa- NC prefix in other Atlantic languages, among them the closely related Buy (Doneux 1991)

Hypothesis: LAC comes about through the combination of etymological knowledge and borrowing.

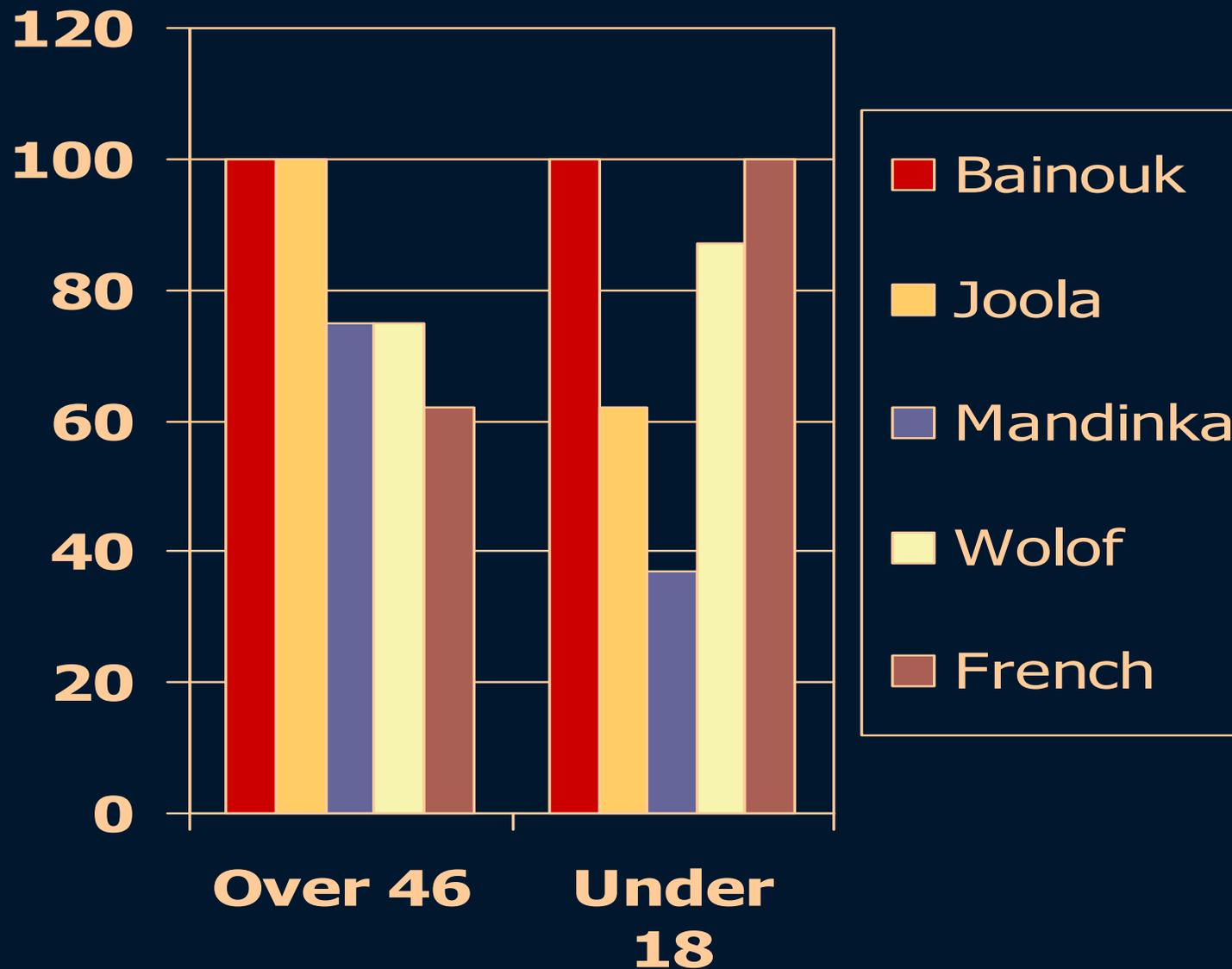
Outline of a research paradigm



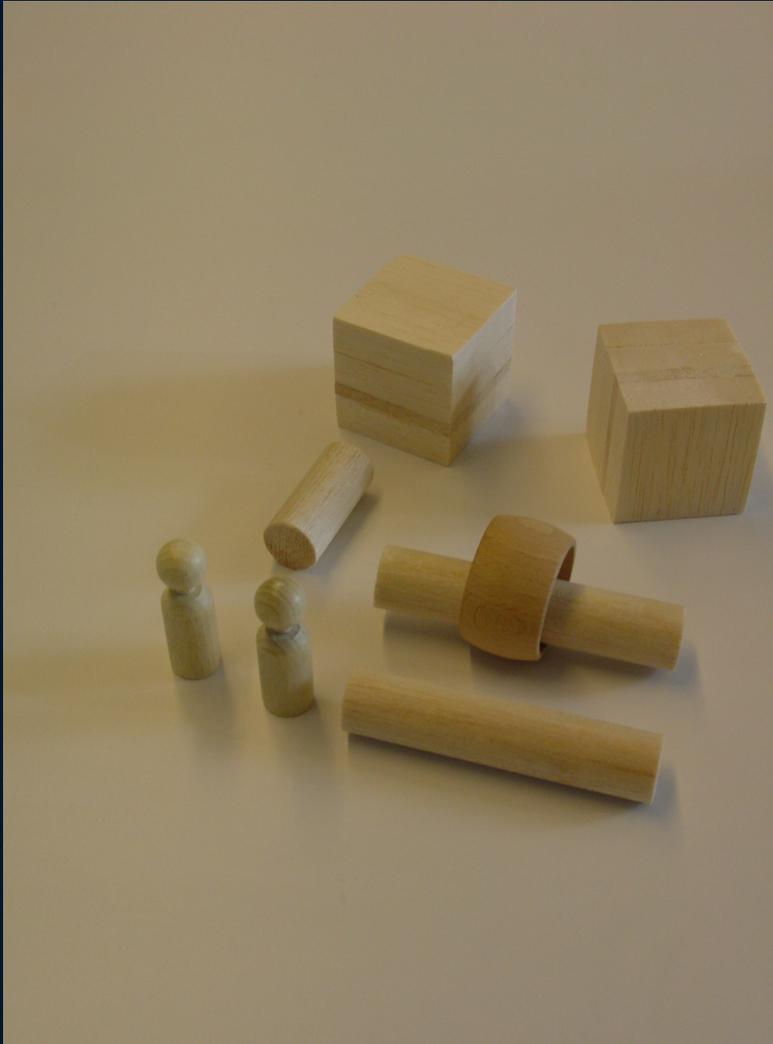
It's a lot of work!

- Inclusion of data from all three varieties of Bainouk.
- Establishment of an inventory of nouns with agreement properties in all Bainouk varieties and the contact languages.
- Combination of sociolinguistic data with linguistic data in order to determine plausibility and direction of borrowing.
- Use of McMahon & MacMahon's (2006) Hi-Hi and Lo-Lo Swadesh sublists to detect borrowings in basic vocabulary.
- Experiments comprising naming tasks for novel objects and definition/classification/sorting and word creation tasks and elicitation of concord data for novel nouns (cf. Seifart 2005, Sagna 2008).

Combining sociolinguistic and linguistic data to corroborate assumptions on borrowing



Naming and sorting tasks



Definition/classification/word creation tasks

- Is a bugusō
 - a) an instrument for cutting
 - b) a fruit
 - c) a body part?
- Kamun means 'steering wheel'. How do you say 'this steering wheel'?
- Invent a Bainouk word for 'window'.

More ideas?

