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MANDE LANGUAGES

INTRODUCTION

Mande languages are spoken across much of inland West Africa up to the northwest of Nigeria as their eastern limit. The center of gravity of the Mande-speaking world is situated in the southwest of Mali and the neighboring regions. There are approximately seventy Mande

languages. Mande languages have long been recognized as a coherent group. Thanks to both a sufficient number of clear lexical correspondences and the remarkable uniformity in basic morphosyntax, the attribution of a given language to Mande is usually straightforward. The major subdivision within Mande is between Western Mande, which comprises the majority of both languages and speakers, and Southeastern Mande (aka Southern Mande or Eastern Mande, which are also the names for the two subbranches of Southeastern Mande), a comparatively small but linguistically diverse and geographically dispersed group. Traditionally, Mande languages have been classified as one of the earliest offshoots of Niger-Congo. However, their external affiliation still remains a working hypothesis rather than an established fact. One of the most well-known Mande languages is probably Bamana (aka Bambara), as well as some of its close relatives, which in nonlinguistic publications are sometimes indiscriminately referred to as Mandingo. Mande languages are written in a variety of scripts ranging from Latin-based or Arabic-based alphabets to indigenously developed scripts, both syllabic and alphabetic.

GENERAL OVERVIEWS

There are few general overviews of the whole family, such as [Dwyer 1989](#), [Vydrin 2006](#), and [Vydrin 2004](#), and they are mostly concerned with phonology and nominal morphology. A notable exception is represented by [Vydrin, et al. 2016](#) (in Russian), which provides grammatical sketches of twenty-one Mande languages, an overview of the Mande family, and a survey of the writing systems used for Mande languages. [Vydrin 2002](#) provides an overview of the tonal systems of Mande languages, [Konoshenko 2014](#) surveys person-number agreement, and [Perekhval'skaya and Vydrin 2015](#) explores the numeral systems. Some of the better grammars representative of different Mande groups are [Creissels 2013](#) on Mandinka, [Innes 1971](#) on Mende (cited under **Textbooks**), [Le Bris and Prost 1981](#) on Bobo, [Jones 1998](#) on the Boko-Busa language cluster, and [Bearth 1971](#) on Tura.

Bearth, Thomas. 1971. *L'énoncé toura (Côte d'Ivoire)*. Summer Institute of Linguistics Publications in Linguistics and Related Fields 30. Norman: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Univ. of Oklahoma.

[A very solid and detailed description of the Southern Mande language Tura.](#)

Creissels, Denis. 2013. *Le mandinka: Phonologie, grammaire, textes*. In collaboration with Pierre Sambou. Paris: Karthala. [ISBN: 9782811110062]

[One of the best descriptions of a Western Mande language from Greater Manding dialect continuum.](#)

Dwyer, David J. 1989. Mande. In *The Niger-Congo languages*. Edited by John Bendor-Samuel, 47–66. Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America. [ISBN: 9780819173751]

[A brief overview of the family with information on the history of research and an overview of some typical grammatical features. The paper also presents arguments for Dwyer's classification of Mande in two branches, Western and Eastern \(aka Southeastern\), with Bobo classified as Eastern Mande.](#)

Jones, Ross McCallum. 1998. *The Boko/Busa language cluster*. Studies in African linguistics 30. Munich: LINCOM Europa. [ISBN: 9783929075977]

[A thorough description of the Boko-Busa language cluster from the Eastern branch of Southeastern Mande.](#)

Konoshenko, Maria. 2014. Лично-числовое согласование в языках манде:

Внутригенетическая типология. PhD diss, Institut Yazykoznaniiya RAN. [class:thesis-phd]

A typological survey of cases of person-number agreement between nouns and various functional words in Mande languages.

Le Bris, Pierre, and André Prost. 1981. *Dictionnaire bobo-français, précédé d'une introduction grammaticale et suivi d'un lexique français-bobo*. Paris: Société d'Études Linguistiques et Anthropologiques de France. [ISBN: 9782852971028]

In its grammar and lexicon, Bobo is somewhat unusual within Mande. The book is a good dictionary of Bobo introduced by a good grammatical sketch.

Perekhval'skaya, Elena, and Valentin Vydrin. 2015. *Системы счисления в языках манде[<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01287426/document>]*. In *Африканский Сборник*. Edited by Aleksander Zheltov, 356–377. Saint Petersburg, Russia: MAE RAN.

An overview of the numeral systems of Mande languages.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2002. Some hasty notes on the ways of evolution of Mande tonal systems. In *Lexical and structural diffusion: Interplay of internal and external factors of language development in the West African Sahel*. Edited by Robert Nicolaï and Petr Zima, 243–264. Nice, France: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines de Nice. [ISBN: 9782914561181]

An overview of the tonal systems of Mande languages.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2004. Areal and genetic features in West Mande and South Mande phonology: In what sense did Mande languages evolve? *Journal of West African Languages* 30.2: 113–125.

A brief English summary of some of the discussion in Vydrin 2006 focusing on how, from the historical perspective, we can reconcile the sharp differences between the phonological structures of Western and Southeastern Mande languages.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2006. К реконструкции фонологического типа и именной морфологии пра-манде. In *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana: Труды Института лингвистических исследований*. Vol. 2. 3–246. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Nauka.

This is the published version of the author's 2001 habilitation dissertation. It provides a good comparative overview of various phonological features (such as nasalization and initial consonant alternation) and nominal morphology (such as plural and referential status markers) of Mande languages. The discussion takes a historical perspective, with a lot of data and reconstructions provided. One of the more controversial hypotheses advanced in the book is the reconstruction of a restricted noun class system.

Vydrin, Valentin, Juliya Mazurova, Andrey Kibrik, and Elena Markus, eds. 2016. *Языки манде. Языки мира*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Nestor-Istoria.

A collection of grammar sketches (in Russian) of twenty-one Mande languages from different branches (Bamana, Mandinka, Kakabe, Jogo, Susu, Soninke, Kpelle, Looma, Loko, Goo, Dan, Kla-Dan, Mano, Tura, Mwan, Guro, Yaure, Gban, Beng, Wan, Boko). The sketches all follow the same structure. The volume is introduced with an overview of the Mande family and also contains a survey of the writing systems used for Mande languages.

TEXTBOOKS

No textbooks cover the whole of Mande languages or linguistics. Textbooks exist for a number of major Mande languages that are or have been taught at the university level, such as Bamana (aka Bambara), for example, Bird and Kanté 1976 and Bird, et al. 1977 for English speakers; Bailleul 2005 and Morales 1996 for French speakers; and Vydrin 2008 for Russian speakers. Several textbooks for smaller languages have been produced by Peace Corps, such as Thach and

Dwyer 1981 for Kpelle and deZeeuw and Kruah 1981 for Mano. Innes 1971 is a grammatical description and textbook of Mende.

Bailleul, Charles. 2005. *Cours pratique de bambara*. Bamako, Mali: Donniya. [ISBN: 9782911741791]

[An introductory Bamana textbook in French with accompanying audio recordings.](#)

Bird, Charles S., John Hutchison, and Mamadou Kanté. 1977. *An ka bamanankan kalan: Introductory Bambara*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club.

[An introductory Bamana textbook in English with accompanying audio recordings available *online\[<http://www.iu.edu/~celtie/Bambara-Intro.html>\]*.](#)

Bird, Charles S., and Mamadou Kanté. 1976. *An ka Bamanankan kalan: Intermediate Bambara*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club.

[An intermediate Bamana textbook in English with accompanying audio recordings available *online\[<http://www.iu.edu/~celtie/Bambara-Intermediate.html>\]*.](#)

deZeeuw, Peter, and Rexanna Kruah. 1981. *A learner directed approach to Mano: A handbook on communication and culture, with dialogs, texts, cultural notes, exercises, drills and instructions*. East Lansing: Michigan State Univ.

[A textbook of Mano \(Southeastern Mande\).](#)

Innes, Gordon. 1971. *A practical introduction to Mende*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, Univ. of London.

[A representative description and textbook of a Western Mande language from the Southwestern group known for its initial consonant alternations.](#)

Morales, José. 1996. *J'apprends le bambara = Bàro ka di bamanankan na*. Paris: Karthala. [ISBN: 9782865374953]

[An introductory to intermediate Bamana textbook in French organized around dialogues, with accompanying audio recordings. Provides no explanation of grammar.](#)

Thach, Sharon V., and David J. Dwyer. 1981. *Kpelle: A reference handbook of phonetics, grammar, lexicon and learning procedures*. East Lansing: Michigan State Univ.

[A textbook of Kpelle \(Western Mande\) with a lexicon.](#)

Vydrin, Valentin. 2008. *Учебник языка бамана*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Saint Petersburg State Univ.

[An introductory to intermediate Bamana textbook in Russian with accompanying audio recordings.](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

There exist several older bibliographies that provide a rather exhaustive coverage of sources published until the late 1980s. [Platiel 1985](#) is an unannotated bibliography, which was complemented by many annotations and some additional references in [Kastenholz 1988](#). [Vydrin 1990](#) is complementary to the other two bibliographies in providing references to sources in Russian. [Stewart and Hair 1969](#) is an example of a language-specific annotated bibliography. Kastenholz, Raimund. 1988. *Mande languages and linguistics*. African Linguistic Bibliographies 4. Hamburg, Germany: Helmut Buske Verlag. [ISBN: 9783871188879]

[A bibliography of publications on Mande languages in English, French, German, and Portuguese. In terms of content, it largely overlaps with \[Platiel 1985\]\(#\) but provides many annotations. It is organized by linguistic classification \(groups and languages\).](#)

Platiel, Suzy. 1985. Bibliographie de linguistique mandé. *Mandenkan* 9:1–142.

A bibliography of publications on Mande languages (as well as some sources on Zarma and Songhay) in English, French, German, and Portuguese. It also provides references to some grey literature, such as unpublished PhD theses. It is organized by author and contains a thematic index.

Stewart, Gail, and Paul E. H. Hair. 1969. A bibliography of the Vai language and script. *Journal of West African Languages* 6.2: 109–124.

A somewhat-dated annotated bibliography of publications on the Vai language and script.

Vydrin, Valentin. 1990. Bibliographie de la linguistique mandé soviétique (annotée). *Mandenkan* 19:83–105.

A bibliography of publications on Mande languages in Russian with translations of the titles in French and many annotations. It is organized by author.

JOURNALS AND BOOK SERIES

There exists one journal dedicated to Mande languages and linguistics, ****Mandenkan****. Papers on Mande languages and linguistics also appear in journals specialized in African languages and linguistics and various general linguistic journals, usually of general functional and typological orientation. There is also one journal dedicated to Mande-speaking peoples and their cultures, ****Mande Studies: The Journal of the Mande Studies Association****, but it seems to have ceased regular publication. Finally, there is a book series ****Mande Languages and Linguistics**** published by Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.

Mande Languages and Linguistics[https://www.koeppe.de/reihe_mande-languages-and-linguistics-langues-et-linguistique-mande]. 1996–. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [class:bookSeries].

A book series on Mande languages and linguistics published by Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.

**Mande Studies: The Journal of the Mande Studies*

Association[<http://mandestudies.org/journal/>]*. 1999–2006. [class:periodical]

This is the journal of the Mande Studies Association published by the University of Wisconsin. It appeared from 1999 to 2006 with the frequency of one issue per year with most articles on cultural anthropology and recent history of the Mande-speaking world. It contains a number of papers on Mande linguistics.

**Mandenkan: Bulletin semestriel d'études linguistiques mandé*[<https://mandenkan.revues.org/>]*. 1981–. [class:periodical]

This open-access journal has been published by the Langage, langues et cultures d'Afrique noire (National Centre for Scientific Research) and Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales since 1981 with the usual frequency of two issues per year. It publishes both regular journal articles and long articles with grammatical sketches and dictionaries. Only

***one**[<http://lacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/fichiers/Mandenkan/>]* of the two online interfaces provides access to scans of the papers from a number of older issues. The two interfaces further differ in their search functionalities and the available download formats.

CONFERENCES

There is one conference series dedicated to Mande languages and linguistics, ****International Conference Mande Languages and Linguistics****, and one conference series, ****International Conference on Mande Studies****, with papers mostly on cultural anthropology and recent history of the Mande-speaking world and occasionally a few linguistics papers.

International Conference Mande Languages and Linguistics. [class:other]

A conference series dedicated to Mande languages and linguistics. The first conference took place in 1989 in Paris. After a long gap, the conference series has been continued in 2008 (Saint Petersburg), 2011 (Paris), and 2014 (Bobo-Dioulasso).

International Conference on Mande Studies[<http://mandestudies.org/conference/>]. [class: webLink]

A generally triennial conference series of the Mande Studies Association. The first conference in the series was held in 1972 (London), followed by a gap until 1993 (Bamako). Most papers are on cultural anthropology and recent history of the Mande-speaking world. Occasionally, there are linguistics papers.

TEXT COLLECTIONS AND CORPORA

Two big open-access online corpora and two big open-access collections of books and periodicals are available for Bamana and Maninka of Guinea, two closely related Manding varieties. There are relatively many editions of various Manding traditional texts, such as the Bamana Segu epic in Dumestre 1979. Normally, they are accompanied by a translation. Tones are often marked as well. Collections of texts with translations for Mande languages other than various Manding varieties, such as Woodham 2003 on San of Toma (Eastern Mande), are less numerous. Many such collections were published in Africa, such as Bearth 1999 on Tura (Southern Mande), and therefore may be difficult to access.

Bearth, Thomas. 1999. *Wɛɛn-mɛ̀ɛ̀bòà wún zìzìbò-sè̀ikwé (A kpulu fò́ólé)/Recueil d'histoire toura (Fascicule 1)*. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: Société Internationale de Linguistique.

[A collection of interviews on Tura history with French translation.](#)

Bibliothèque Électronique Bambara[<http://cormand.huma-num.fr/biblio/>]. [class: dataSet-database]

[An online interface allowing free access to hundreds of books and issues of newspapers and journals in Bamana.](#)

Bibliothèque Électronique Maninka[<http://cormand.huma-num.fr/maninkabiblio/>]. [class: dataSet-database]

[An online interface allowing free access to hundreds of books and issues of newspapers and journals in Maninka.](#)

Corpus Bambara de Référence[<http://cormand.huma-num.fr/index.html>].

Open-access corpus of written Bamana with interface in French. There is also an interface in *Russian[<http://maslinsky.spb.ru/corbama/>]*. In June 2016, it had almost three million words with disambiguated texts counting almost six hundred thousand words. It is one of the biggest corpora for sub-Saharan African languages. It allows for complex searches and comes with extensive documentation and downloadable electronic dictionaries.

Corpus Maninka de Référence[<http://cormand.huma-num.fr/cormani/>].

Open-access corpus of Maninka of Guinea texts written in the official Roman-based spelling and in N'ko with interface in French. There is also an interface in *Russian[<http://maslinsky.spb.ru/cormani/>]*. This corpus follows the model of Corpus Bambara de Référence and offers comparable tools. In June 2016, the part with texts in the Roman-based script contains around four hundred thousand words and the N'ko part more than three million words. By that date, no disambiguated texts and no Maninka dictionary are available on the site.

Dumestre, Gérard. 1979. *La geste de Ségou*. Paris: Armand Colin. [ISBN: 9782912839206]

[An edited version of the Segu epic in Bamana with translation in French.](#)

Woodham, Kathryn. 2003. *Analyse de textes san (parler de Toma): Aperçu des traits caractéristiques du genre narratif d'une langue mandé du Burkina Faso*. Mande Languages and Linguistics 5. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450746]
A collection of well-glossed and analyzed texts in San of Toma (Eastern Mande).

CLASSIFICATIONS

Mande languages have long been recognized as a coherent group (Prost 1953, Welmers 1958). The major subdivision within Mande is between Western Mande, which comprises the majority of both languages and speakers, and Southeastern Mande (aka Southern Mande or Eastern Mande), a comparatively small but linguistically diverse and geographically dispersed group (Kastenholz 1996, Vydrin 2009). Traditionally, Mande languages have been classified as one of the earliest offshoots of Niger-Congo (Dwyer 1989, Welmers 1958). However, their external affiliation still remains a working hypothesis rather than an established fact (Dimmendaal 2008).
Dimmendaal, Gerrit J. 2008. Language ecology and linguistic diversity on the African continent. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2.5: 840–858.

The paper argues that the evidence for the inclusion of Mande in Niger-Congo so far has not been convincing and therefore Mande is best considered as an independent family.

Dwyer, David J. 1989. Mande. In *The Niger-Congo languages*. Edited by John Bendor-Samuel, 47–66. Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America. [ISBN: 9780819173751]

A brief overview of the family with information on the history of research and an overview of some typical grammatical features. The paper also presents arguments for Dwyer's classification of Mande in two branches, Western and Eastern (aka Southeastern) with Bobo classified as Eastern Mande.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 1996. *Sprachgeschichte im West-Mande*. Mande Languages and Linguistics 2. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450715]

A classification based on shared innovations that has been taken up in the *Ethnologue[www.ethnologue.com]*. This classification puts Soninke, Bozo, Bobo, and Samogo languages in one group within Western Mande.

Prost, André. 1953. *Les langues mandé-sud du groupe mana-busa*. Dakar, Senegal: Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire.

A comparison of the vocabularies of nineteen Mande languages suggesting to single out a separate Southeastern branch within Mande.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2009. On the problem of the Proto-Mande homeland. *Вопросы языкового родства—Journal of Language Relationship* 1:107–142.

A lexicostatistic classification based on one-hundred-word Swadesh basic vocabulary lists for 54 Mande languages. This classification groups Soninke with Bozo and Bobo with Samogo languages as two subgroups of Western Mande. It also moves Susu and Jalonke under one clade with Southwestern Mande. The paper also argues for the Proto-Mande homeland in Southern Sahara.

Welmers, William. 1958. The Mande languages. *Georgetown University Monograph Series in Languages and Linguistics* 11:9–24.

A classification that used lexicostatistics and suggested that Mande must be one of the oldest offshoots of Niger-Congo and that Bobo forms a separate branch on the same level as Western and Southeastern Mande.

HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

Dwyer 1989 and Vydrin 2009 (both cited under *Classifications*) and Vydrin 2006 (cited under *General Overviews*) propose reconstructions of Proto-Mande lexicon and parts of morphology. In addition, Vydrin 2009 discusses the question of the Proto-Mande homeland. Vydrin 2016 presents the current state of the reconstruction of the Proto-Mande and presents the author's project on a Proto-Mande etymological dictionary. Kastenholz 1996 (cited under *Classifications*) and Schreiber 2008 are extensive treatises on the reconstruction of Proto-Western Mande and Proto-Eastern Mande, respectively. Vydrin 2000 and Vydrin 2010 are rather critical reviews of Kastenholz 1996 and Schreiber 2008, respectively. Vydrin 2007 proposes a reconstruction of initial consonants of Southern Mande. Nikitina 2011 proposes an explanation for the emergence of SOVX constituent order characteristic of Mande, but typologically unusual. Dwyer 1994 analyzes the emergence of the third tone level in Bobo, and Creissels 2004 is an insightful study of the emergence of labial-velar stops in some Manding varieties.

Creissels, Denis. 2004. L'occlusive vélaire sonore g et les labio-vélares (w, gw, kw, gb, kp) en mandingue. *Mandenkan* 39:1–22.

The paper explores the historical relation between velars, labiovelars, and labial-velars in Manding and convincingly argues that labial-velar stops in some Manding varieties are recent innovations.

Dwyer, David J. 1994. Internal evidence for tone splitting in Bobo. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 15.1: 29–45.

The paper proposes an internal reconstruction of the Bobo tonology arguing that the earlier low tones correspond to modern Bobo low tones, while the earlier high tones have split into mid and high tones. This split is argued to be due to a high tone upstep triggered by certain morphemes in the phrase-final position.

Nikitina, Tatiana. 2011. Categorical reanalysis and the origin of the S-O-V-X word order in Mande. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 32.2: 251–273.

This paper argues based on the unusual behavior of Mande postpositional phrases, that the development of S-O-V-X was a consequence of reanalysis of constructions with deverbal nouns as verb phrases, with subsequent replacement of the older type of verb phrase by the newly introduced structure.

Schreiber, Henning. 2008. *Eine historische Phonologie der Niger-Volta-Sprachen*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450760]

A somewhat controversial proposal for the reconstruction of Proto-Eastern Mande. It also provides an overview of the morphology and phonology of Eastern Mande languages.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2000. Review: Raimund Kastenholz; Sprachgeschichte im West-Mande; Methoden und Rekonstruktionen—Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 281 S. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 21.1: 106–118.

A rather critical review of Kastenholz 1996 (cited under *Classifications*).

Vydrin, Valentin. 2007. South Mande reconstruction: Initial consonants. In *Аспекты компаративистики 2*. Edited by I. S. Smirnova, 409–498. *Orientalia et classica* 11: Труды Института восточных культур и античности. Moscow: Издательство Российского Государственного Гуманитарного Университета. [ISBN: 9785728109037]

A proposal for the reconstruction of the word-initial consonants in Southern Mande.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2010. Book review: Henning Schreiber; Eine historische Phonologie der Niger-Volta-Sprachen; 2008. *Вопросы языкового родства—Journal of Language Relationships* 3:153–163.

A rather critical review of [Schreiber 2008](#).

Vydrin, Valentin. 2016. Toward a Proto-Mande reconstruction and an etymological dictionary. *Faits de Langues* 47:109–123.

The paper discusses the present state of the reconstruction of the Proto-Mande and addresses the issue of the position of Mande with respect to Niger-Congo. It also presents the author's ongoing efforts in compiling a Proto-Mande etymological dictionary.

WESTERN MANDE

Central Mande

This is the largest group in terms of the number of both languages and speakers. Greater Manding, which forms the core of this group, is probably the best-known and the best-described Mande subgroup. The grammars of Mandinka ([Creissels 2013](#), cited under *General Overviews*) and Maninka of Kita ([Creissels 2009](#)) provide a great introduction into Manding linguistics and are some of the better examples of a grammar of a Mande language. The grammar of Bamana in [Dumestre 2003](#) contains a wealth of information, but is somewhat less easily accessible for nonspecialists. The many existing analyses of various aspects of the Bamana grammar have been recently complemented by a large open-access corpus, [**Corpus Bambara de Référence**](#) (cited under *Text Collections and Corpora*). Numerous articles on various Manding varieties and also a few papers on some other Central Mande languages have been published in the journal [**Mandenkan**](#) (cited under *Journals and Book Series*). A number of textbooks are also available for major Manding varieties (see works cited under *Textbooks*). A number of dialectological surveys of Manding are available, such as [Bird 1982](#), [Davydov 2012](#), [Derive 1990](#), and [Galtier 1980](#). [Welmers 1976](#), a grammar of Vai, is a good description of a Central Mande language outside of Greater Manding. [Persson and Persson 1980](#) and [Tröbs 1998](#) are some of the few sources on the Jogo-Jeli subgroup, and [Kastenholz 1987](#) on the Mokole subgroup.

Bird, Charles S. 1982. *The dialects of Mandekan*. Bloomington: Africans Studies Program at Indiana Univ.

A dialectological survey of twenty-nine Manding varieties organized around brief grammatical sketches for each variety. Although it provides a brief overview of tone in Manding, it generally does not mark tone.

Creissels, Denis. 2009. *Le malinké de Kita: Un parler mandingue de l'ouest du Mali*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450784]

A good grammar of the Manding variety Maninka of Kita. It provides a clear analysis of the tone system in terms of marked low tone and introduces the notion of clitic in the description of Manding to account for the tonal behavior of a number of functional morphemes.

Davydov, Artem. 2012. Диалекты манден Гвинеи и литературный манинка. In *Между Нигером и Конго: Заметки на полях; К 60-летию Константина Игоревича Позднякова*. Edited by Valentin Vydrin and Aleksander Zheltov, 123–141. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Nestor-Istorija.

A brief survey of the Manding varieties spoken in Guinea and their relation to the so-called Standard Maninka of Guinea.

Derive, Marie-Jo. 1990. *Etude dialectologique de l'aire manding de Côte-d'Ivoire*. 2 vols. Paris: Peeters. [ISBN: 9782877230261]

A dialectological survey and reconstruction of the Manding varieties spoken in Côte d'Ivoire. Tone is not marked consistently.

Dumestre, Gérard. 2003. *Grammaire fondamentale du bambara*. Paris: Karthala. [ISBN: 9782845864023]

A reference grammar of Bamana. It contains a wealth of detailed information richly corroborated by examples extracted from texts. Unfortunately, it is not easily accessible due to the way it is structured as well as a lack of glosses. Only lexical tone is marked.

Galtier, Gérard. 1980. Problèmes dialectologiques et phonographématiques des parlers mandingues. PhD diss., Université Paris 7. [class:thesis-phd]

A dialectological survey of Manding geared toward establishing a diaphonology of Manding that could be used to create a unified spelling system for all Manding varieties.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 1987. Das Koranko: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Nord-Mande-Sprachen. PhD diss., Universität Köln. [class:thesis-phd]

A description of Koranko. One of the few available sources for the languages of the Mokole subgroup.

Persson, Andrew M., and Janet Persson. 1980. *Collected field reports on aspects of Ligbi grammar*. Collected Language Notes 16. Legon: Univ. of Ghana.

A brief grammatical sketch of Ligbi from the Jogo-Jeli subgroup. Tones are marked and glosses are provided.

Tröbs, Holger. 1998. *Funktionale Sprachbeschreibung des Jeli (West-Mande)*. Mande Languages and Linguistics 3. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450722]

A basic description of Jeli from the Jogo-Jeli subgroup. Tones are marked only in the phonology chapter.

Welmers, William E. 1976. *A grammar of Vai*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press. [ISBN: 9780520095557]

A very decent, basic description of Vai, a Central Mande language outside of Greater Manding.

Southwestern Mande and Susu-Yalunka

The languages of this group have enjoyed a good deal of attention since early on. There is a basic grammar or a grammatical sketch for every language, such as [Innes 1971](#) for Mende (cited under [*Textbooks*](#)), [Kimball 1983](#) for Loko, [Sadler 2006](#) for Looma, [Babaev 2010](#) for Zialo, [Lüpke 2005](#) for Yalunka, and [Touré 1994](#) for Susu. However, the coverage and accuracy of the sources vary significantly. Tone marking may be lacking and glosses are often not provided. For a few bigger languages, several textbooks have been produced, such as [Westermann and Melzian 1930](#) and [Thach and Dwyer 1981](#) (cited under [*Textbooks*](#)) for Kpelle. The tonal systems of these languages have been relatively well studied, both from synchronic and comparative perspectives ([Dwyer 1973](#), [Leben 1973](#), the latter cited under [*Phonology*](#)). Similarly, the phenomenon of initial consonant alternations in Southwestern Mande and its historical origins have also been well studied ([Dwyer 1986](#), [Vydrin 2006](#), the latter cited under [*General Overviews*](#)). The question of whether some Southwestern Mande languages may display nonaccusative alignments in parts of their grammars is discussed in [Vydrin 2011](#) (cited under [*Morphology*](#)).

Babaev, Kirill V. 2010. *Zialo: The newly-discovered Mande language of Guinea*. Munich: Lincom Europa. [ISBN: 9783862880164]

A grammatical sketch of Zialo, which used to be considered a dialect of Looma.

Dwyer, David J. 1973. *The comparative tonology of Southwestern Mande nominals*. East Lansing: Department of Linguistics and Oriental and African Languages, Michigan State Univ.

A comparative study and reconstruction of the tonology of nouns in Southwestern Mande.

- Dwyer, David J. 1986. Evolutionary morphology of definite articles in Southwestern Mande. In *Current approaches to African linguistics*. Vol. 3. Edited by Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, 149–170. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Foris. [ISBN: 9789067651387]
 The paper offers an overview of the articles and deictics in Southwestern Mande. It also argues that the proposed article in Southwestern Mande languages originates in a third-person singular pronoun and that it is this article that is largely responsible for the emergence of initial consonant alternations in these languages.
- Kimball, Les. 1983. *A description of the grammar of Loko*. Tambiama: Institute for Sierra Leonean Languages.
 A basic description of Loko. Tones are marked but glosses are not provided.
- Lüpke, Friederike. 2005. A grammar of Jalonke argument structure. PhD diss., Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. [class:thesis-phd]
 The Guinean dialect of Yalunka described is the only Mande language that appears to have lost tones. Although the focus of the study is the argument structure, it also provides a grammatical sketch of Jalonke.
- Sadler, Wesley L. 2006. A complete analysis of the Looma language, interior Liberia, West Africa. *Mandenkan* 42:1–109.
 This work was written in the end of 1940s but was not fully published until 2006. A basic grammatical description marking surface tone realizations.
- Touré, Aboubacar. 1994. *Éléments de description de la langue soso*. PhD diss., Université Stendhal–Grenoble 3. [class:thesis-phd]
 An accessible, basic description of Susu with many glossed examples and tone marking.
- Westermann, Diedrich, and Hanz J. Melzian. 1930. *The Kpelle language in Liberia: Grammatical outline, colloquial sentences and vocabulary*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
 A textbook of Kpelle with a short dictionary.

Soninke-Bozo, Samogo, and Bobo

Soninke is the biggest and the best-known language within this set of languages. It has a long tradition of study, of a rather uneven usefulness. Most linguistic research has been concentrated on Eastern Soninke varieties. The best available full grammar of a Soninke variety (Soninke of Kaédi) to date is [Diagana 1995](#), despite some problems with the way the discussion is organized and its arcane system of tone marking. [Creissels 2016](#) is the first study that offers a clear exposition of the segmental and tonal phonology of a Soninke variety (Soninke of Kingi, which is another Eastern Soninke variety spoken in Mali). Bozo languages remain very poorly documented. [Blecke 1996](#) is the only grammar of a Bozo language that appeared since the times of [Daguet, et al. 1953](#), unfortunately without tone marking. Until the 1990s, [Prost 1971](#) on Seen remained the only grammatical description of a Samogo language. Our knowledge of the Samogo languages has improved recently with the publication of the grammatical sketch of Jo in [Carlson 1993](#) and a full and thorough grammatical description of a Dzuun in [Solomiac 2014](#). [Morse 1967](#) (cited under **Eastern Mande**) helps to clarify the usage of the term Samogo, and [Idiatov 2015](#) (cited under **Language Contact and Areal Linguistics**) provides a synchronic and diachronic account of clause-final negative markers in Samogo and Bobo languages. There have been relatively many publications on some of the Bobo varieties and some aspects of Bobo historical grammar, such as [Dwyer 1994](#) (cited under **Historical and Comparative Linguistics**) on the emergence of the third tone level in Bobo. However, there is still no full modern grammar

of Bobo. The best grammatical sketches are [Le Bris and Prost 1981](#) (cited under *General Overviews*) on a Southern Bobo variety and [Prost 1983](#) on a Northern Bobo variety. Blecke, Thomas. 1996. *Lexikalische Kategorien und grammatische Strukturen im Tigemaxo (Bozo, Mande)*. Mande Languages and Linguistics 1. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450708]

[The only available grammar of a Bozo language. It does not mark tones.](#)

Carlson, Robert. 1993. A sketch of Jo, a Mande language with a feminine pronoun. *Mandenkan* 25:1–109.

[The only available source of grammatical data on Jo. It also contains a short lexicon.](#)

Creissels, Denis. 2016. Phonologie segmentale et tonale du soninké (parler du Kingi). *Mandenkan* 55:3–174.

[The best available description of the phonology of a Soninke variety. It clarifies the phonological status of a number of consonants and the details of consonant gemination. It offers a comprehensive description of the tonal system of Soninke arguing that it can be analyzed in terms of marked low tone \(opposed to zero\) on the structural level.](#)

Daguet, Jacques, Mamadou Konipo, and Mamadou Sanankoua. 1953. *La langue bozo*. Etudes Soudaniennes 1. Limoges, France: Institut Français d’Afrique Noire.

[An old but still relevant overview of a number of Bozo varieties, accompanied by a text collection and a lexicon.](#)

Diagana, Ousmane Moussa. 1995. *La langue soninké: Morphosyntaxe et sens (à travers le parler de Kaédi (Mauritanie))*. Paris: Éditions L’Harmattan. [ISBN: 9782738432902]

[Despite its location, Soninke of Kaédi in Mauritania is an Eastern Soninke variety. This description is the first full grammar of Soninke that fully acknowledges the relevance of tone in the phonology of Soninke \(until the 1980s, it used to be claimed that Soninke does not have tone at all\). Although the tone marking system used is very confusing, the tone notation is generally reliable. The description is very extensive, but the relevant data is not always easy to find.](#)

Prost, André. 1971. *Éléments de sembla: Phonologie, grammaire, lexique (Haute Volta: Groupe mandé)*. Afrique et Language 5. Lyon, France: Afrique et Language.

[A grammatical sketch of Seen accompanied by a lexicon. Tones are marked, but they do not always seem to be reliable.](#)

Prost, André. 1983. Essai de transcription grammaticale du dialecte bobo de Tansila, Haute-Volta. *Mandenkan* 5:1–101.

[A basic grammatical sketch of a Northern Bobo variety.](#)

Solomiac, Paul. 2014. *Phonologie et morphosyntaxe du dzùùngoo de Samogohiri*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896450791]

[A description of Dzuun \(Western Mande\) that dedicates a lot of attention to phonetics. Dzuun is a language with three tone levels.](#)

SOUTHEASTERN MANDE

Eastern Mande

This is probably one of the smallest and the least well-studied groups of Mande languages. [Prost 1953](#) (cited under *Classifications*) is a dated overview also including information on some Southern Mande languages. [Morse 1967](#) is a useful source clearing some of the confusion due to the similarity of names of various Mande languages and ethnic groups in the area. Many older sources score poorly in terms of coverage of data, accuracy of notation, and user friendliness.

The grammar of the Boko-Busa language cluster in [Jones 1998](#) (cited under *General Overviews*); and see the accompanying dictionaries) is the best description of an Eastern Mande language. The description of San of Toma in [Platiel 1974](#) is extensive and detailed but is rather difficult to use. A useful complement is [Woodham 2003](#) (cited under *Text Collections and Corpora*), an annotated collection of glossed texts of San of Toma. The best available description of Bisa, [Vanhoudt 1992](#) (cited under *Phonetics*), is unfortunately not particularly user friendly but contains an acoustic study of the vowels of Bisa arguing that the ATR feature (advanced tongue root) is probably used to differentiate its vowels. [Platiel 1982](#) is one of the few published sources on Kyenga and Shanga. Sociolinguistic situation of various Eastern Mande languages is discussed in [Vossen and Keuthmann 2002](#) and [Hoeth 2003](#) (both cited under *Language Contact and Areal Linguistics*). [Ebermann 2009](#) is a study of double negation in Northern San. [Schreiber 2008](#) is an attempt at historical reconstruction of Eastern Mande, and [Vydrin 2010](#) is its rather critical review (both cited under *Historical and Comparative Linguistics*).

Ebermann, Erwin. 2009. From double negation to portmanteau: Comparative sentence negation in Northern Samo. In *Negation patterns in West African languages and beyond*. Edited by Norbert Cyffer, Erwin Ebermann, and Georg Ziegelmeyer, 261–286. Typological Studies in Language 87. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. [ISBN: 9789027206688]

[An overview of double negation morphology in Northern Samo varieties. The paper further attempts to explain the variation among the different varieties by sociohistorical differences.](#)

Morse, Mary Lynn Alice. 1967. The question of Samogo. *Journal of African Languages* 6:61–80.

[The paper cleared the confusion with respect to the names of various ethnic groups and languages that are sometimes called Samogo. It distinguishes the Western Mande group Samogo from the Eastern Mande group Samo or San that contains at least two different languages, Sane \(aka Northern San\) and San \(aka Southern San\).](#)

Platiel, Suzy. 1974. Description du parler samo de Toma (Haute Volta): Phonologie, syntaxe. PhD diss., Université René Descartes (Paris 5). [class:thesis-phd]

[An extensive but not very user-friendly description of San of Toma.](#)

Platiel, Suzy. 1982. Notes de recherche sur le tyanga et le shanga. *Mandenkan* 4:71–93.

[One of the very few published sources on Kyenga and Shanga, two closely related endangered languages. The information provided is very limited. Tones are not marked.](#)

Southern Mande

Southern Mande is a comparatively small but linguistically diverse group. It has remained relatively poorly documented until the beginning of the 21st century. Basically, until that time, the only full-scale grammar of a Southern Mande language was the description of Tura in [Bearth 1971](#) (cited under *General Overviews*), which still remains one of the better descriptions of a Mande language. Another important source from that period that is still valuable is the atlas of the Southern Mande languages of Côte d'Ivoire in [Halaoui, et al. 1983](#). More recently, a number of grammars and grammatical sketches of Southern Mande languages have appeared, such as [Vydrin and Mongnan 2008](#) on Gweetaa Dan, [Makeeva 2012](#) on Kla Dan, [Paperno 2014](#) on Beng, and [Khachatryan 2015](#) on Mano. Some important publications on the phonetics and phonology of the languages of the group include [Bearth 1968](#) (cited under *Phonetics*) and [Bearth 1992](#) (cited under *Phonology*) for Tura, [Le Saout 1976](#) (cited under *Phonetics*) for Gban, and [Le Saout 1979](#) (cited under *Phonetics*) and [Vydrin 2003](#) (cited under *Phonetics*) for Guro.

Some useful papers on the morphosyntax of the languages of the group are [Bearth 1992](#) for Tura (cited under [*Syntax*](#)); [Idiatov 2003](#), [Idiatov 2005](#), and [Idiatov 2008](#) for Tura and Southern Mande (cited under [*Morphology*](#)); [Vydrin 2004](#) (cited under [*General Overviews*](#)), [Vydrin 2006](#) (cited under [*Morphology*](#)), and [Vydrin 2009](#) (cited under [*Syntax*](#)) for Southern Mande as a group; and [Nikitina 2012](#) for Wan and Southern Mande (cited under [*Syntax*](#)).

[Perekhval'skaya 2008](#) addresses the metaphors involving body-part terms in Mwan and Southern Mande. [Vydrin 2006](#) (cited under [*General Overviews*](#)) and [Vydrin 2007](#) (cited under [*Historical and Comparative Linguistics*](#)) deal with aspects of phonological reconstruction of Southern Mande, while [Vydrin 2009](#) (cited under [*Language Contact and Areal Linguistics*](#)) compares phonological and grammatical similarities between Southern Mande and Kru languages.

Halaoui, Nazam, Kalilou Tera, and Monique Trabi. 1983. *Atlas des langues mandé-sud de Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: Institut de Linguistique Appliquée, Université d'Abidjan.

[An overview of basic grammatical features and lexicon of the Southern Mande languages of Côte d'Ivoire, largely summing up what was known about these languages by that time.](#)

Khachatryan, Maria. 2015. Grammaire du mano. *Mandenkan* 54:1–252.

[A modern grammar of a Guinean dialect of Mano based on the author's PhD.](#)

Makeeva, Nadezhda. 2012. *Грамматический строй языка кла-дан в типологическом контексте родственных языков*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Institut Yazykoznaniiya RAN.

[A grammar of Kla Dan, a Southern Mande enclave surrounded by Manding varieties. The grammar strives to complement the description of a given grammatical phenomenon in Kla Dan with a comparative overview of similar phenomena in other Mande languages.](#)

Paperno, Denis. 2014. Grammatical sketch of Beng. *Mandenkan* 51:1–130.

[A good grammatical sketch of Beng, which is a rather divergent language within the group.](#)

Perekhval'skaya, Elena. 2008. Body parts and their metaphoric meanings in Mwan and other South-Mande languages. *Mandenkan* 44:53–62.

[A concise overview of some of the metaphors involving the names of body parts in Southern Mande languages with the focus on Mwan.](#)

Vydrin, Valentin. 2005. Quelques recommandations méthodologiques concernant la description des langues mandé-sud. *Mandenkan* 41:1–22.

[An overview of some of the typical grammatical features of Southern Mande languages that linguists describing these languages should pay particular attention to.](#)

Vydrin, Valentin, and Alphonse Kessébeu Mongnan. 2008. *Dictionnaire Dan-Français (dan de l'Est) avec une esquisse de grammaire du dan de l'Est et un index français-dan*. Saint Petersburg, Russia: Nestor-Istoria. [ISBN: 9780993996917]

[A dictionary of Gweetaa Dan, an Eastern Dan variety spoken in Côte d'Ivoire, preceded by a grammar sketch.](#)

PHONETICS

There are not so many phonetic studies of Mande languages. Most phonetic research has been done on the acoustics of tone, such as [Bearth 1968](#) on Tura, [Hogan and Manyeh 1996](#) on Kono, and [Le Saout 1979](#) and [Vydrin 2003](#) on Guro. [Le Saout 1976](#) on Gban and [Solomiac 2014](#) on Dzuun (cited under [*Soninke-Bozo, Samogo, and Bobo*](#)) represent rare examples of detailed studies on the segmental and suprasegmental phonetics of a Mande language. [Vanhoudt 1992](#) provides acoustic data on the vowels of Bisa, arguing that the ATR feature (advanced tongue root) is likely to be used to differentiate them.

Bearth, Thomas. 1968. Étude instrumentale des tons du toura (Côte d'Ivoire). *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 24:45–58.

An instrumental study of the tones in Tura, a Southern Mande with four level tones.

Hogan, John T., and Morie Manyeh. 1996. A study of Kono tone spacing. *Phonetica* 53.4: 221–229.

An instrumental study of the tones in Kono, a Western Mande language with two level tones.

Le Saout, Joseph. 1976. *Étude descriptive du gban (Côte-d'Ivoire): Phonétique et phonologie*. Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale 21. Paris: Société d'Études Linguistiques et Anthropologiques de France.

One of the rare detailed studies of the phonetics of a Mande language. It also provides a lexicon and a glossed text.

Le Saout, Joseph. 1979. *Notes sur la phonologie du gouro (zone de Zuénoula)*. Nice, France: Centre d'Étude sur le Phonétisme des Langues Africaines.

A description of the sound system of Guro (Southern Mande), arguing that Guro has two tone levels on the phonological level and four tone levels phonetically due to the tone depressing behavior of voiced consonants.

Vanhoudt, Bettie. 1992. Description du bisa de Zabré (langue mandé du groupe sud-est). PhD diss., Université Libre de Bruxelles. [class:thesis-phd]

The description is not very user friendly, but it contains an acoustic study of the vowels of Bisa (Eastern Mande). Bisa is the only Mande language for which it has been argued with phonetic data that the ATR feature (advanced tongue root) is used to differentiate its vowels.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2003. La phonologie gouro: Deux décennies après Le Saout. *Mandenkan* 38:89–113.

The paper argues that Guro (Southern Mande) is in the process of evolving from a two level tone system, as described in Le Saout 1976, to a three level tone system. Three tone levels need to be distinguished at least in personal pronouns.

PHONOLOGY

The phonological phenomena that have attracted the most attention in the literature on Mande languages are tone (e.g., Creissels and Grégoire 1993, Konoshenko and Kuznetsova 2015, Leben 1973, Le Saout 1979), nasalization (e.g., Bearth 1992, Creissels 1989), and prosodic organization on word and morpheme level (Bearth 1971, Le Saout 1979, Vydrin 2010).

Bearth, Thomas. 1971. *L'énoncé toura (Côte d'Ivoire)*. Summer Institute of Linguistics Publications in Linguistics and Related Fields 30. Norman: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Univ. of Oklahoma.

A grammar of Tura, a Southern Mande language with a rather complicated segmental and suprasegmental phonology. The author uses the term “syllable” to refer to the prosodic entity (comparable to prosodic word) that Le Saout 1979 calls “syllabeme” and Vydrin 2010 “foot.”

Bearth, Thomas. 1992. La pertinence latente: A propos du traitement des liquides et de la nasalisation dans les langues dites “sans consonnes nasales.” *Verbum* 4:203–218.

The paper discusses the issue of the phonological status of nasalization in Tura (Southern Mande) as compared to some other languages of the region.

Creissels, Denis. 1989. La nasalité en bambara du Beledugu (parler de Daban). *Mandenkan* 17:41–68.

A discussion of the complex phonology of nasalization in Bamana of Beledugu with an overview of nasalization in other Manding varieties. An interesting conclusion of this

discussion is that Standard Bamana must have emerged as a koine of Maninka (Western Manding) and Bamana (Eastern Manding) varieties.

Creissels, Denis, and Claire Grégoire. 1993. La notion de ton marqué dans l'analyse d'une opposition tonale binaire: Le cas du mandingue. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 14.2: 107–154.

The paper proposes that tonal systems of some Manding languages are best analyzed as privative with the low tone being the marked tone, which typologically is rather uncommon.

Konoshenko, Maria, and Olga Kuznetsova. 2015. Songs in African tonal languages: Contrasting the tonal system and the melody. In *Language, Music, and Computing*. Edited by Polina Eismont and Natalia Konstantinova, 166–175. Communications in Computer and Information Science 561. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. [ISBN: 9783319274973]

The paper considers how tone is reflected in singing in Guinean Kpelle and Guro. It argues that contour tones are less preserved in melody than level tones, and surface tones are reflected in melody rather than underlying tones.

Le Saout, Joseph. 1979. *Notes sur la phonologie du gouro (zone de Zuénoula)*. Nice, France: Centre d'Étude sur le Phonétisme des Langues Africaines.

A description of the sound system of Guro (Southern Mande), arguing that Guro has two tone levels on the phonological level and four tone levels phonetically due to the tone depressing behavior of voiced consonants. It also introduces the term syllabeme to refer to an entity comparable to prosodic word.

Leben, William. 1973. Suprasegmental phonology. PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology. [class:thesis-phd]

This foundational work on autosegmental phonology is largely based on the discussion of data of Mende, a Western Mande language.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2010. Le pied métrique dans les langues mandé. In *Essais de typologie et de linguistique générale: Mélanges offerts à Denis Creissels*. Edited by Franck Floricic, 53–62. Lyon, France: ENS Éditions. [ISBN: 9782847881974]

The paper argues for a rather unconventional application of the term “foot” to Mande languages to describe a prosodic entity comparable to prosodic (or phonological) word.

MORPHOSYNTAX

Morphology

Mande languages provide some interesting examples of morphological categories that typologically are rather unusual, such as the deobliquative verbal derivation (Idiatov 2003 and Idiatov 2008), initial consonant alternations (Vydrin 2006, cited under *General Overviews*), person-number agreement morphology on clause linking markers (Idiatov 2010), and on other kinds of functional words (Konoshenko 2014, cited under *General Overviews*). Certain phenomena may be well known in other parts of the world but are special from African perspective, such as the antipassive derivation (Creissels 2012), the passive-like and anticausative-like P-lability (Creissels 2014), variations on nonaccusative alignments (Vydrin 2011), and the emergent morphological case (Vydrin 2006). Certain aspects of the morphology of Mande languages pose particular theoretical challenges for the concepts of wordhood and grammatical meaning and for the directionality of grammaticalization and morphologization (Idiatov 2003, Idiatov 2005, Idiatov 2008). Nikitina 2009 analyzes action nominalizations in Wan (Southern Mande) and Idiatov 2000 the functions of tense and aspect markers in Bamana (Western Mande).

- Creissels, Denis. 2012. *The origin of antipassive markers in West Mande languages[http://www.deniscreissels.fr/public/Creissels-West_Mande_antipassives.pdf]*. Paper presented at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea, Stockholm, 29 August–1 September 2012. [class:conference-paper]
The paper describes the antipassive markers in West Mande languages and discusses their origin.
- Creissels, Denis. 2014. P-lability and radical P-alignment. *Linguistics* 52.4: 911–944.
This paper on the typology of P-lability devotes an important part to the discussion of the passive-like and anticausative-like P-lability common in a number of Western Mande languages.
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2000. Le sémantisme des marqueurs aspecto-temporels du bambara: Une tentative d'analyse. *Mandenkan* 36:1–60.
A detailed analysis of the functions and use of the markers of tense and aspect in Bamana (Western Mande).
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2003. Структура глагола в языке тура (Западная Африка, семья манде): элемент [-LÁ]. MA diss., Saint Petersburg State Univ. [class:thesis-ma]
A description of the deobliquative derivational marker in Tura, where it has the shape *-lǎ*, and similar formatives in other Southeastern Mande languages. This kind of derivation is typologically unique. Furthermore, the marker presents a rare clear case of antimorphologization.
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2005. The exceptional morphology of Tura numerals and restrictors: Endoclitics, infixes and pseudowords. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 26.1: 31–78.
The paper explores the ability of the roots of Tura (Southern Mande) numerals to be split by restrictors, which are neither affixes nor clitics in other contexts. It also offers a historical account and addresses some theoretical questions, such as endoclysis, word integrity, and constancy of the morphological status of linguistic entities, arguing for the relevance of the concept of pseudoword (form).
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2008. Antigrammaticalization, antimorphologization and the case of Tura. In *Theoretical and empirical issues in grammaticalization*. Edited by Elena Seoane and María José López-Couso, and (in collaboration with) Teresa Fanego, 151–169. Typological Studies in Language. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. [ISBN: 9789027229892]
The paper offers a theoretical discussion of the concepts of degrammaticalization, antigrammaticalization, and grammaticalization. By addressing the concept of grammatical meaning, it proposes a stricter definition of (anti-)grammaticalization in terms of obligatoriness and introduces the notion of antimorphologization. It discusses an example of antimorphologization from Tura (Southern Mande) of the deobliquative derivational marker.
- Idiatov, Dmitry. 2010. Person-number agreement on clause linking markers in Mande. *Studies in Language* 34.4: 832–868.
The paper explores the morphology and history of person-number agreement on clause linking markers, introducing reported discourse in a range of Mande languages. The agreement with nonsubject controllers is semantic in origin in that a nonsubject controller is necessarily also the source of the reported discourse.
- Nikitina, Tatiana. 2009. The function and form of action nominalization in Wan. *Mandenkan* 45:17–28.

The paper illustrates the variety of functions that can be associated with action nominalization in Wan (Southern Mande), a language that makes little or no use of syntactic subordination.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2006. Emergence of morphological cases in South Mande: From the amorphous type to inflectional? In *Case, valency and transitivity*. Edited by Leonid Kulikov, Andrej Malchukov, and Peter de Swart, 49–64. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. [ISBN: 9789027230874]

The paper explores the emergence of morphological case in Southern Mande languages, including the ergative case on pronouns in Guro and locative forms of nouns in Tura and Dan.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2011. Ergative/Absolutive and Active/Stative alignment in West Africa: The case of Southwestern Mande. *Studies in Language* 35.2: 409–443.

The paper explores the possibility that some Southwestern Mande languages display nonaccusative alignments in parts of their grammars.

Syntax

The theme that probably featured most prominently in the literature on Mande syntax is the synchronic and diachronic account of the auxiliary-like Tense Aspect Modality (TAM) markers found in the immediately postsubject slot in many Mande languages and the robust and typologically unusual SOVX constituent order of Mande (Bearth 1995, Creissels 2005, Kastenholz 2003, Nikitina 2009). A few papers dealt with relative constructions, some of which are typologically quite interesting (Grégoire 1980, Nikitina 2012). The morphosyntax of negation marking has been subject to both synchronic descriptive studies (Vydrin 2009) and historical-comparative research from a language-contact perspective (Idiatov 2012 and Idiatov 2015, both cited under *Language Contact and Areal Linguistics*). The research on the focus marking system of Tura has been particularly relevant for theories of focus (Bearth 1992). Finally, Creissels 2006, which is a very good general introduction to syntax from a nonformalist perspective, uses many examples from Mande languages.

Bearth, Thomas. 1992. Constituent structure, natural focus and focus types in Toura. *Folia Linguistica* 26.1–2: 75–94.

The paper describes the complex, morphologically marked focus system of Tura. The focus system of Tura has posed an important challenge to various typologies of focus based on the concepts of informativity or salience.

Bearth, Thomas. 1995. Nominal periphrasis and the origin of the predicative marker in Mande languages—an alternative view. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 41:89–117.

The paper engages with some of the hypotheses that have been previously proposed with respect of the origin of the unusual clausal syntax of Mande languages. It takes Tura as an example of a Southern Mande language where the auxiliary-like TAM markers typical of Mande languages can be shown to have a nonverbal origin.

Creissels, Denis. 2005. S-O-V-X constituent order and constituent order alternations in West African languages. In *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society 31st annual meeting*. Held in Berkeley, CA, 18–20 February 2005. Edited by Rebecca Cover and Yuni Kim, 37–51. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California at Berkeley. [class:conference-paper]

The paper discusses SOVX constituent order characteristic of Mande and VO ~ OV constituent order alternations found in many neighboring languages that have been argued to be due to a transfer from Mande. The paper warns that such claims and their presumable historical implications should be taken with much caution because the languages using the option of OV

constituent order are in fact structurally rather diverse and differ from the Mande system in some important respects.

Creissels, Denis. 2006. *Syntaxe générale, une introduction typologique*. 2 vols. Paris: Hermès. [ISBN: 9782746213999]

A thorough general introduction to syntax from a nonformalist perspective with many examples from Mande languages.

Grégoire, Claire. 1980. La structure sous-jacente des relatives en mande nord. *Africana Linguistica* 8:75–114.

The paper discusses relative clauses, including multiple relative clause constructions, in Western Mande and provides an overview of the literature.

Kastenholz, Raimund. 2003. Auxiliaries, grammaticalization, and word order in Mande. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 24.1: 31–53.

The paper argues that imperfective and perfective auxiliaries in Central Mande languages have a nonverbal origin. Therefore, the emergence of auxiliaries could not have caused word order change in the early history of Mande.

Nikitina, Tatiana. 2009. The syntax of postpositional phrases in Wan, and “SOVX” language. *Studies in Language* 33.4: 910–933.

The paper argues that the SOVX word order of Wan (and by implication of Mande in general) is a consequence of an unusual syntactic behavior of postpositional arguments, which do not form a syntactic constituent with their verb but instead appear in a fixed position outside of the VP.

Nikitina, Tatiana. 2012. Clause-internal correlatives in Southeastern Mande: A case for the propagation of typological rara. *Lingua* 122:319–334.

This paper discusses a typologically unusual relativization strategy attested in several Southeastern Mande languages where the clause containing the relativized noun phrase appears inside the main clause, immediately preceding the resumptive pronoun.

Vydrin, Valentin. 2009. Negation in Southern Mande. In *Negation patterns in West African languages and beyond*. Edited by Norbert Cyffer, Erwin Ebermann, and Georg Ziegelmeyer, 223–260. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. [ISBN: 9789027206688]

An overview of negation marking patterns in Southern Mande languages.

LANGUAGE CONTACT AND AREAL LINGUISTICS

There are relatively few studies on language contact and areal linguistics focusing on Mande languages. [Creissels 2005](#) (cited under **Syntax**) discusses SOVX constituent order characteristic of Mande and VO ~ OV constituent order alternations found in many neighboring languages that have been argued to be due to a transfer from Mande. [Vydrin 2009](#) suggests that Southern Mande and Kru languages may form a Sprachbund. [Vossen and Keuthmann 2002](#) and [Hoeth 2003](#) discuss the concept of “language island” as applied to some Eastern Mande languages surrounded by Gur languages. [Idiatov 2012](#) argues that clause-final negative markers in a number of Southeastern Bamana dialects result from contact-induced evolution modeled on the neighboring Senufo languages. [Childs 2010](#) explores the results of the prolonged contact between Western Mande and Atlantic languages mainly from the perspective of the latter affected group. Similarly, [Dombrowsky-Hahn 1999](#) analyzes how the Senufo language Minyanka has been affected by contact with the Western Mande language Bamana. [Idiatov 2015](#) explores the complex history of the clause-final negative markers in a number of distantly related

but geographically close Mande languages that has involved both parallel evolution and lateral transfer.

Childs, G. Tucker. 2010. The Mande and Atlantic groups of Niger-Congo: Prolonged contact with asymmetrical consequences. *Journal of Language Contact* 3.1: 13–46.

The paper explores the structural consequences of the contact between Mande and Atlantic, largely from the perspective of the latter affected group, and the reasons for why the transfer of linguistic features usually goes from Mande to Atlantic.

Dombrowsky-Hahn, Klaudia. 1999. *Phénomènes de contact entre les langues minyanka et bambara (Sud du Mali)*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896451132]

A book-long discussion of the language contact between Minyanka (Senufo) and Bamana in the south of Mali.

Hoeth, Sabine. 2003. Southern Samo language contact. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 12.1: 57–77.

The paper discusses the degree of influence of the neighboring languages on Southern San and comes to the conclusion that it is not very significant and that Southern San should be characterized as an island language in terms of Vossen and Keuthmann 2002.

Idiatov, Dmitry. 2012. Clause-final negative markers in southeastern Bamana dialects: A contact-induced evolution. *Africana Linguistica* 18:169–192.

The paper analyzes clause-final negative markers found in a compact group of southeastern Bamana dialects. It argues that although these markers have language-internal source, their innovative pattern of use and ongoing grammaticalization are best analyzed as an instance of contact-induced evolution modeled on the neighboring Senufo languages.

Idiatov, Dmitry. 2015. Clause-final negative markers in Bobo and Samogo: Parallel evolution and contact. *Journal of Historical Linguistics* 5.2: 235–266.

The paper provides an exhaustive overview of the data available on the use of clause-final negative markers in Bobo and Samogo languages, which are unusual typologically but characteristic of the languages of northern sub-Saharan Africa. It analyzes the complex history of the clause-final negative markers in these languages involving both parallel evolution and lateral transfer.

Vossen, Rainer, and Klaus Keuthmann. 2002. The notion of language island and the case of Bisa in Burkina Faso (West Africa). In *Lexical and structural diffusion: Interplay of internal and external factors of language development in the West African Sahel*. Edited by Robert Nicolai and Petr Zima, 215–242. Nice, France: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines de Nice. [ISBN: 9782914561181]

The paper discusses the notion of language island and questions whether it is appropriate to apply it to Bisa (Eastern Mande). It concludes that Bisa is better characterized as an “island language.”

Vydrin, Valentin. 2009. Areal features in South Mande and Kru languages. In *When languages meet: Language contact and change in West Africa*. Edited by Norbert Cyffer and Georg Ziegelmeyer, 91–116. Topics in African Studies 13. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. [ISBN: 9783896452573]

The paper catalogues similarities in linguistic structure between Southern Mande and Kru languages, suggesting that these languages may form a Sprachbund.

WRITING SYSTEMS

Mande languages are written in a variety of scripts ranging from Latin-based or Arabic-based alphabets to indigenously developed scripts, both syllabic and alphabetic. There exists a rather extensive literature on the various non-Roman scripts used for writing Mande languages, especially on the indigenously developed syllabic scripts, such as the Vai script, and alphabetic scripts, such as N'ko. Arabic-based scripts known as *adjami* have attracted somewhat less interest in the literature. Dalby 1967, papers in the special issue of *Special issue: Mande Studies*, and Vydrin 2014 provide a good introduction on these different types of scripts. A survey of the writing systems used for Mande languages can also be found in a chapter in Vydrin, et al. 2016 (cited under *General Overviews*). A large corpus of N'ko texts can be found in the open-access *Corpus Maninka de Référence*. Ogorodnikova 2016 discusses some older manuscripts in Mande languages written in *adjami*.

Corpus Maninka de Référence[<http://cormand.huma-num.fr/cormani/>].

Open-access corpus of written Maninka of Guinea (with interface in French) that contains a subcorpus of texts written in N'ko. In June 2016, the part with texts in N'ko counted more than three million words. By that date, no texts have yet been disambiguated.

Dalby, David. 1967. A survey of the indigenous scripts of Liberia and Sierra Leone: Vai, Mende, Loma, Kpelle and Bassa. *African Language Studies* 8:1–51.

Overview and discussion of the history and form of the indigenous writing systems of several Mande languages in Liberia and Sierra Leone and one Kru language (Bassa). Mande syllabaries: Vai (c. 1830), Mende (c. 1920), Loma and Kpelle (c. 1930).

Ogorodnikova, Darya. 2016. Exploring paratexts in old Mande manuscripts. In *Tracing manuscripts in time and space through paratexts*. Edited by Giovanni Ciotti and Hang Lin, 1–34. *Studies in Manuscript Cultures* 7. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton. [ISBN: 9783110473148]

A paper on older manuscripts in Mande languages written in *adjami*.

Special issue: Mande Studies 3 (2001).

The journal *Mande Studies* features a special section on “Souleymane Kanté and the N’Ko Alphabet.”

Vydrin, Valentin. 2014. Ajami script for the Mande languages. In *The Arabic script in Africa: Studies in the use of a writing system*. Edited by Meikal Mumin and Kees Versteegh, 199–224. *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 71. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. [ISBN: 9789004256798]

An overview of the history of the use of Arabic script for Mande languages and of the research on this subject. It also discusses the deviations in the Arabic scripts used for Mande languages from the general Arabic system.