

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag diskutiert repräsentative Beispiele für die Auswirkungen des Kontakts mit zentralen Ostküsten-Bantusprachen und Arabisch auf die Syntax der Kerndialekte des Swahili von Kenia und Tansania. Die Vergleichbarkeit dieser beiden Kontaktsituationen wird maximiert durch die Betrachtung der Auswirkungen auf den Gebrauch, und nicht so sehr auf die Struktur der Swahili-Syntax. Es wird gezeigt, daß Wandel im Gebrauch Veränderungen in der Struktur voranging. Als Schlußfolgerung gilt, daß trotz Unterschieden in Teilen der Swahili-Grammatik, die durch Kontakt mit zentralen Ostküsten-Bantusprachen und Arabisch ausgelöst wurden, beide Kontakte für die Richtungsbestimmung intern gesteuerter grammatischer Evolution ausschlaggebend waren. Dies bedeutet, daß die Kontaktsituationen zu einer Auswahl aus verschiedenen, theoretisch möglichen Richtungen des grammatischen Wandels vor dem Sprachkontakt führten, um den Wandel in bestimmte Richtungen zu lancieren. Es wird weiterhin angenommen, daß, während der grammatische Kontakt über Zweisprachigkeit Möglichkeiten für gezielte Richtungen des Wandels eröffnete, soziale Faktoren eine wesentliche Rolle bei der Annahme dieser Möglichkeiten seitens des Swahili spielten. Eine Implikation ist die, daß die Untersuchung der durch soziale Kontaktbedingungen motivierten Wandelerscheinungen bei der Rekonstruktion der Details der Entwicklung in der urbanen Swahili-Gesellschaft helfen kann.

## RESUME

Cet article est consacré aux effets résultant du contact avec le bantu de la zone côtière du centre-est et avec l'arabe sur la syntaxe des dialectes swahili du Kenya et de la Tanzanie. La comparaison de ces deux situations de contact est beaucoup plus optimale, si on considère les effets d'usage du swahili que si on se fait seulement à sa structure. Il sera montré que les changements dans l'usage précèdent ceux sur la structure. Il sera conclu qu'en dépit de la diversité des parties affectées de la grammaire swahili, suite au contact avec le bantu de la zone côtière du centre-est et avec l'arabe, les deux contacts ont favorisé un mécanisme d'évolution interne de la grammaire. Ceci signifie que les situations de contact ont consisté en une seule sélection parmi plusieurs directions de précontact théoriquement possibles de changement grammatical afin d'en favoriser certains (changements) dans des directions spécifiques. Il a été suggéré de ce fait que, bien que le contact de grammaires, à travers le bilinguisme, favorise certaines directionnalités de changement, les facteurs sociaux ont été assez prépondérants dans le cas du swahili. Une des implications de ceci est qu'une investigation des changements motivés par les facteurs sociaux du contact peut aider à une reconstruction détaillée de l'évolution de la communauté swahili urbaine.

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## ON THE NON-LINEAR ANCESTRY OF TASAWAQ (NIGER). OR: HOW "MIXED" CAN A LANGUAGE BE?

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- 1 Introduction
  - 2 The dialects/languages referred to as "Northern Songhay"
  - 3 The problem of the genealogical classification of "Northern Songhay": monogenetic Songhay, monogenetic Tamajaq, or "mixed" Songhay-Tamajaq ancestry? – Review of the literature
  - 4 The Tasawaq language of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tessem
    - 4.1 Phonology
    - 4.2 Morphology
      - 4.2.1 Pronouns
      - 4.2.2 Verb inflection
        - 4.2.2.1 Primary affirmative inflectional categories
        - 4.2.2.2 Primary negative inflectional categories
        - 4.2.2.3 Secondary (periphrastic) inflectional categories
      - 4.2.3 Derivation of nouns and verbs
      - 4.2.4 Ordinal numbers
      - 4.2.5 Compounding
      - 4.2.6 Noun plurals
      - 4.2.7 Summary of morphological correspondences to either Songhay-Zarma or Tamajaq
    - 4.3 Syntax
    - 4.4 Lexicon
  - 5 A scenario for the non-genetic historical development of Tasawaq
  - 6 Outlook: towards a typology of "mixed" languages in Africa
- Notes  
References

## 1 Introduction

The best-known case of a "mixed" language in Africa is that of Ma'a (Mbugu) in Tanzania (cf. THOMASON 1983 also for references). The scientific community is hardly aware of the existence of comparable exciting cases in the Sahara desert and south of it: the so-called Northern Songhay dialects, among them a variety called Tasawaq.

Five reasons can be given for writing this paper:

(1) The sociolinguistic situation of Niger: In 1991 a "Conférence Nationale" was established in the Republic of Niger as part of the process of an overall democratization. In this body's "Rapport sur l'Education", two little linguistic sensations were hidden which changed the linguistic map of Niger: Based on a solid competence in linguistics, University of Niamey-trained members of the "Commission Education" increased the number of "national languages" of the Republic of Niger<sup>1</sup> from eight to ten in the document in question, among them a language the name of which hardly anyone had ever heard before: Tasawaq. This paper aims, among other things, at publicizing the existence of Tasawaq as officially recognized national language in Niger.

(2) Despite rich but selective linguistic documentation (cf. references), the existence of a set of highly interesting cases of language hybridization in the southern Sahara has almost totally escaped recognition by historical linguists, sociolinguists, creolists, etc. of the non-French reading scholarly community. As a matter of fact, scattered information on these languages has been available for more than 120 years.<sup>2</sup>

(3) The available modern literature on Northern Songhay was mainly produced by one extraordinarily prolific author, Robert NICOLAÏ, since 1977. It has reached such an amount and, as time and research progressed, the author has had to change his views on the issue several times, that a guided introduction to the subject appeared to be called for, especially for those members of the scholarly community who don't make it a habit to read French publications.

(4) The case of Tasawaq proves to be at least as fascinating and reveal-

ing as the better known and amply quoted case of Ma'a in Tanzania with which it deserves to be compared on typological grounds with regard to the notion of "mixed" language ancestry.

(5) Finally, the intention is to render accessible more and valuable data on Tasawaq and "mixed" systems, especially concerning grammatical features.

In order to avoid terminological confusion, the following established designations for languages and groups of dialects shall be retained throughout this paper:

"Songhay-Zarma" or simply "Songhay" henceforth refers to the language which GREENBERG (1963) has classified genetically as Nilo-Saharan, with all its known dialects,

"Northern", "Western", etc. Songhay

refers to the sub-classification of NICOLAÏ (1979 and later), irrespective of the view one may take regarding their genetic or non-genetic origin.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 The dialects/languages referred to as "Northern Songhay"

LACROIX (1971) was obviously the first to identify a number of related speech variants spoken by sedentary and nomadic people in northern Niger, southeastern Mali, and southwestern Algeria which he referred to as dialects of Songhay, yet at the same time considered to be "mixed". Given their geographical distribution generally to the north of the Songhay-Zarma dialect continuum along the Niger River, he suggested the term "Songhay Septentrional", i.e. Northern Songhay. He identified Tâdâksâhak,<sup>4</sup> Tihîtit,<sup>5</sup> and Tagdalt.<sup>6</sup> LACROIX maintains that Tihîtit and Tagdalt are largely intercomprehensible, whereas mutual intelligibility does not exist between them and Tadak-sahak. For lack of sufficient data, LACROIX leaves the question open as to whether the "particular language of the Isawaghen of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tesamt" referred to by NICOLAS (1938:49) ought to be grouped with his "northern group" or rather with the rest of Songhay like the extinct language of Agades (Emghedeshie) which he assumed to go with the rest of Songhay

(LACROIX 1971:92 fn).

In TERSIS' overview of the "Songhay-Zarma Group" (1978), the names of the languages under consideration and the description of their whereabouts differ slightly from LACROIX (1971): Tadáksahak,<sup>7</sup> Tagdalt-Tihéshit,<sup>8</sup> she also adds two more languages: Tasáwaq<sup>9</sup> and Belbali (or: Kora-n-die).<sup>10</sup>

A year later, NICOLAI (1979) begins to provide a linguistically sound basis for the study of these languages. He regroups them as follows:<sup>11</sup>

A. The "nomadic" dialects

1. Tadakshak dialects

spoken by the nomadic Idaksahak basically around Ménaka, comprising several dialects;<sup>12</sup>

2. Tihishit dialects

(a) Tagdalt — spoken by the nomadic Igdalen;

(b) Tabarog — spoken by the nomadic Iberogan in the area southeast of In-Gall;<sup>13</sup>

B. The "sedentary" dialects

3. Tasawaq dialects<sup>14</sup>

(a) Ingelshi<sup>15</sup> — spoken by the sedentary people of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tessem;<sup>16</sup>

(b) BARTH's "Emghedeshie" of Agades;<sup>17</sup>

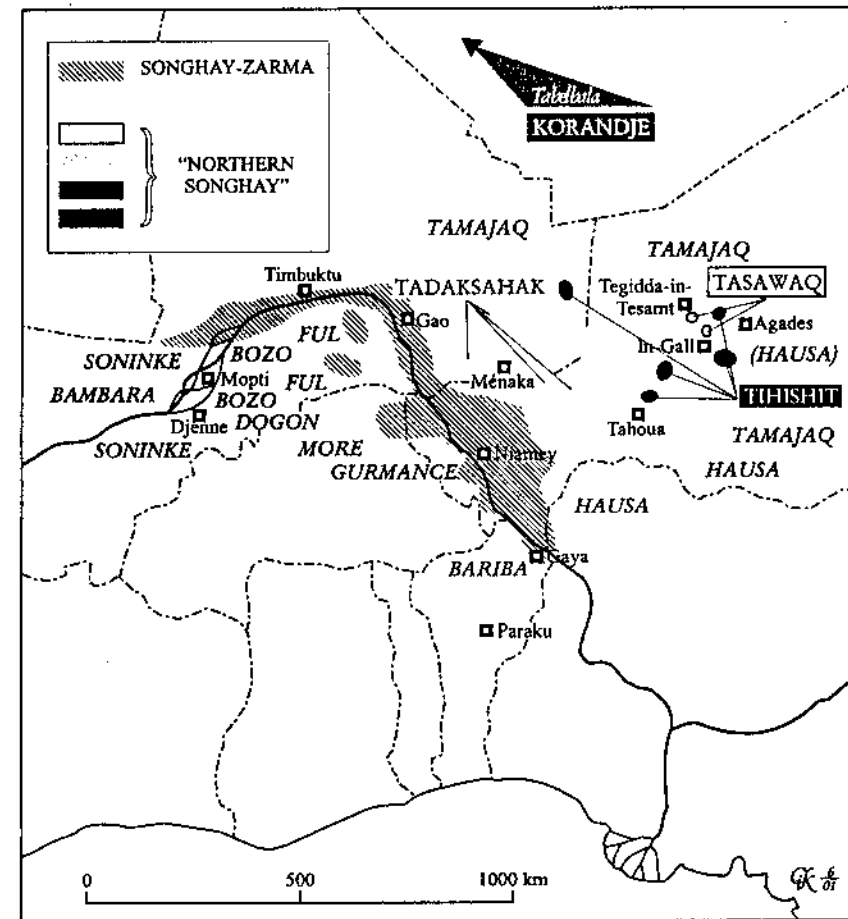
4. Koranje dialect

spoken in the oasis of Tabelbala in southwestern Algeria.

**3 The problem of the genealogical classification of "Northern Songhay": monogenetic Songhay, monogenetic Tamajaq, or "mixed" Songhay-Tamajaq ancestry? — Review of the literature**

In the light of his phonological, lexical, and grammatical comparisons within Songhay-Zarma and across the Songhay-Tamajaq language border, LACROIX (1971:98) does not hesitate to use the term "mixed" languages for Tadakshak, Tihitit, and Tagdalt, i.e. his "Northern Songhay" dialect group — admittedly contrary to received notions in historical linguistics at his time.

Map 1. Geographic distribution of Songhay-Zarma and neighbouring languages (based on PERROT 1981).



The idea of mixed ancestry, at least concerning the physical appearance of the speakers, goes back to the very first contact of Tasawaq speakers with Europeans.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the non-match between physical appearance and language affiliation, the dichotomy of nomadic and sedentary populations, and the particular interrelationship of the languages under consideration with Songhay-Zarma and Tamajaq had intrigued the French group of scholars to no little extent. NICOLAÏ (1979:305) footnotes an exchange of ideas between LACROIX and BERNUS based on at least one unpublished paper by LACROIX ("Langues non berbères de nomades 'touaregs' du Niger") which is reflected in BERNUS & BERNUS (1972:1f), BERNUS (1972:137, 178), and BERNUS & GOULETQUER (1977:9). Their concerns can be summarized as follows:

(1) The inhabitants of the oases In-Gall and Tegidda even though they speak a language "derived" from Songhay, do not form part of the Igdalen,<sup>19</sup> ...

(2) Everybody appears to have accepted that the extinct language of Agades was Songhay (cf. BARTH 1851). However, LACROIX's works appear to indicate that the language spoken in Agades at the end of last century (i.e. Emghedeshie) is closely affiliated to Tasawaght (= Tasawaq), i.e. the language still spoken in In-Gall, and that both are not Songhay despite the appearance of several Songhay elements in their structure and lexicon ...

(3) For the dialects spoken by nomadic groups assimilated to the Tuaregs, however, simple borrowing due to geographical proximity would not suffice to explain their affiliation with Songhay...

(4) For the Igdalen, BERNUS & GOULETQUER (1977:9) maintain that they have retained very closely related dialects in which loans from Berber adjust to a substratum which for LACROIX qualifies as "Proto-Songhay" and which he attaches to the "Northern Songhay" sub-group to which also Emghedeshie belongs as was spoken in Agades in the last century ...<sup>20</sup>

Whereas LACROIX and BERNUS consider "mixing" as a plausible explanation of the facts, NICOLAÏ (1980a) follows the monogenetic track: He considers the dialectal sub-groups of "Northern Songhay" to be first of all genetically related to Songhay. He acknowledges that they are heavily "con-

taminated" by structural influences from neighbouring non-Songhay languages (1980a:59ff). He thereby takes issue with LACROIX's (1971:98) notion of "mixed" ancestry. In his subsequent monograph, NICOLAÏ (1981)

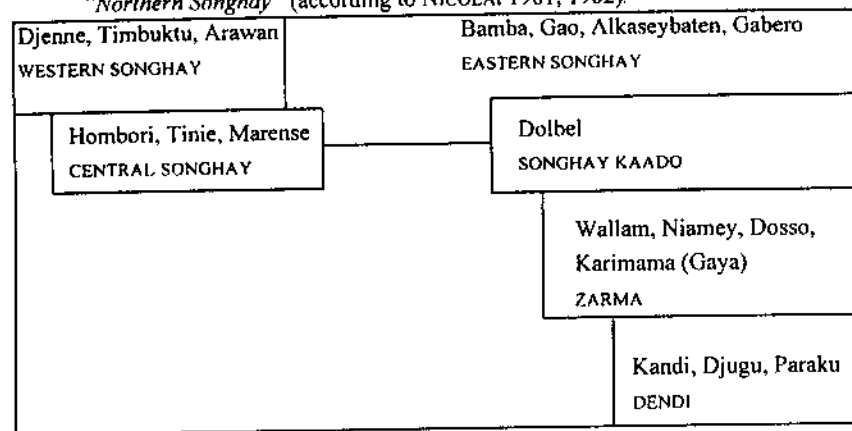
... presents the most complete and systematic description currently available of the different Songhay dialects: not only does he complete the inventory with a thorough treatment of 'Northern Songhay', he also establishes a minimal set of criteria for distinguishing between the dialects ... Songhay can be divided into two dialect groups: Northern Songhay and Southern Songhay. Within each of these groups there is intercomprehension; between the two groups there is little or none. The Northern Songhay dialects have been strongly influenced by Tamasheq and to some extent Arabic, and are called by some authors (e.g. LACROIX 1968 [sic], as quoted by NICOLAÏ 1981:266; HEW) 'mixed languages'. They appear to be vestiges of the northernmost extension of the Songhay empire, and are divided by Nicolaï into 'nomadic' dialects — Tihishit and Tadaksahak — spoken by 'maraboutic' originally Berber tribes particularly influenced by Islam and the Arabic language, and 'sedentary' dialects spoken by groups living in oases: Korandje is spoken in the Algerian oasis of Tabelbela, Tadaksahak [sic], reference should be rather to Tasawaq; HEW] in the oasis of In-Gall in Niger (Ingelsi) and formerly Agadez (Emghedeshie, cf. BARTH 1851). All northern Songhay dialects have obligatory SVO order, and no definite/indefinite contrast; the sedentary dialect Ingelsi has a three-tone system and the nomadic group no tones but a stress system (KABA 1986:75f).

Further on in her review of NICOLAÏ (1981), KABA points out the salient question:

If in Dendi and Zarma [two of the Southern Songhay dialects; HEW] there are four tones and labiovelars, this is largely due to their contact with typically Sub-Saharan languages: Bariba and Hausa ... If by contrast Northern and Western Songhay [i.e. Timbuktu, Djenne, Mopti; HEW] have substituted stress for tone and observe a strict SVO order, this is clearly due to the influence of Tamasheq (and Arabic) ... Nicolaï explains the extreme adaptations of Nomadic Songhay to Tamasheq, and Dendi to Bariba as the result of a situation of bilingualism, where native speakers of Tamasheq or Bariba originally learned Songhay as a foreign language, adapting it to the grid of their own phonological system ... — This interpretation suggests a potential problem of classification to the reviewer: particularly in the case of Northern Songhay, there seem to be many grammatical interferences from Tamasheq, and the lexicon apparently includes a very large proportion of originally Tamasheq words. 'Northern Songhay' is certainly an excellent source of relatively archaic forms of Songhay lexical items, useful for reconstructing 'songhay préalable', but it

poses the classificatory problem of creolized languages in general: if as Nicolai suggests, it is the result of Tamasheq speakers' learning Songhay, how complete does language-learning have to be before we can say that we have a dialect of Songhay, rather than massive borrowing of Songhay vocabulary into Tamasheq? (KABA 1986:80f).

Map 2. Schematic distribution of the "Southern" Songhay-Zarma dialects — excluding "Northern Songhay" (according to NICOLAÏ 1981, 1982).



In his second monographic treatment, NICOLAÏ (1984) advances a fascinating new theory to account for the present situation of linguistic variation within the various dialects of Songhay: He considers it quite likely that, at one time in history, vernacular varieties of Songhay (used for intra-ethnic communication only — NICOLAÏ calls this "Songhay A") coexisted with vehicular varieties which were used for inter-ethnic communication between nomadic and sedentary populations, along the River Niger as much as the trans-Saharan trade routes (called "Songhay B"). Eventually even mother tongue speakers of Songhay A adopted Songhay B varieties in the sense of a true creole! This theory would account, according to NICOLAÏ (1984:148) for (1) the relative homogeneity of Songhay, (2) the fact that it is spoken by culturally and ethnically quite different populations, (3) its traditional function as *lingua franca* in urban agglomerations, (4) the double ancestry of its lexicon and morphology which could hardly be explained by either chance or

a particular genealogical affiliation.

This theory would also match with the observation that Songhay has a rather simple and transparent morphological structure, combined with a rich potential of creating new lexical items through composition and derivation from a rather limited basic lexical stock (NICOLAÏ 1984:151). As for the dialects of "Northern Songhay", NICOLAÏ (1984:153) assumes historical language shift of originally berberophone groups like the Idaksahak and the Ig-dalen and a pre-Hausa population in and around Agades and the oases of In-Gall and Tegidda. Also, for the oasis of Tabelbala in Algeria, the scanty historical sources appear to point in the direction of a former Almoravidic presence in the 11th century. In short, Songhay B was quite likely the language of the salt and dates trade involving several ethnic and linguistic groups along the Niger River between Djenne (Mali) and Gaya (Niger), and as far north as Tabelbala (Algeria), as far northeast as Agades (Niger), and as far south as Paraku (in central Benin). It may also have been a chosen means of communication of groups which had become marginalized through the Tuareg expansion (NICOLAÏ 1984:154).<sup>21</sup>

In a paper presented in 1987(b), NICOLAÏ starts off from this Songhay A vs. Songhay B theory to elaborate on the contact situation between Songhay B users and berberophone Tamajaq speakers. For the lexical enrichment of Songhay B he assumes heavy (re)lexification from Tamajaq. The scenario which he now develops constitutes a radical departure from his previous writings: It is that of an unidentified L<sub>1</sub>-speaking group (possibly Berber/Tamajaq, given the physical features of the population) which, for reasons of inter-ethnic and trade communication, became bilingual — using vehicular Songhay B as L<sub>2</sub>. The pidgin characteristics of Songhay B did not allow full-fledged verbal communication, so the use of this L<sub>2</sub> became replenished in everyday interaction from the available L<sub>1</sub>, i.e. Tamajaq. This happened to such an extent, that NICOLAÏ likes to view this process as "process of constructing a language" rather than speaking of heavy borrowing (or: relexification) from one language into the other. Supposedly assuming a long period of Tamajaq-Songhay B bilingualism, NICOLAÏ has reason not to argue in fa-

avour of more conservative interpretations in keeping with a general monogenetic principle of "normal" language transmission:

(a) neither does he assume independent collective "language shift", i.e. postulating that whole groups of L<sub>1</sub>-Tamajaq speakers gave up L<sub>1</sub> in favour of the Songhay B creole; (b) nor does he accept L<sub>1</sub> (i.e. Tamajaq) maintenance with heavy borrowing (relexification) from vehicular Songhay B.

In the sense of his "construction of a language" he comes round to LACROIX's 1971 notion of "mixed" ancestry.<sup>22</sup> NICOLAÏ depicts this "double ancestry", i.e. the "creation" of new vernacular Northern Songhay dialects<sup>23</sup> graphically; in the following Diagram 1, NICOLAÏ's original and simpler model has been partially extended and modified (cf. also section 6 of this paper for a fuller understanding).

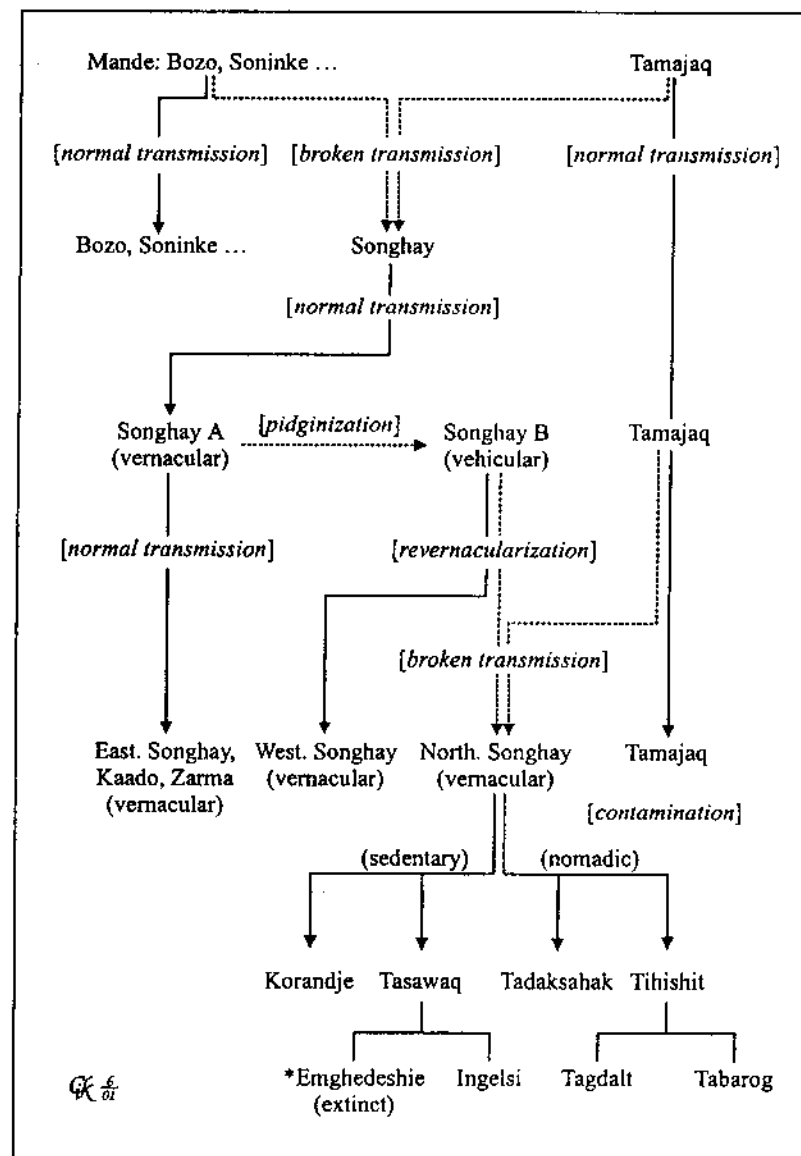
To put it differently: "In terms of genetic affiliation, Northern Songhay is AT THE SAME TIME a Songhay language AND a Tuareg language or a language of neither Songhay nor Tuareg [affiliation]" (NICOLAÏ 1987b:17 fn; translation HEW).

In NICOLAÏ (1989a, 1989b) the author adds the notion of "re-vernacularisation" of the vehicular Songhay B to his concept of "contamination" (= abrupt cross-over from one sub-system type to another) by neighbouring languages. And:

Our hypothesis ... is that the vehicular was developed on the banks of the Niger (western Songhay) and was propagated along the caravan trails (northern Songhay), and that it must have developed very quickly, since it was being utilized as a lingua franca during the epoch of the Songhay Empire (NICOLAÏ 1989b:52).

Both varieties coexist for some time: vehicular Songhay B is, of course, also available for mother tongue speakers of Songhay A when dealing with non-Songhay A speakers.<sup>24</sup> Language contact through bilingualism involving any other non-Songhay language will then yield particular dialects of Songhay B. For yet unknown reasons (NICOLAÏ 1989a:107), at some time in the past vernacular Songhay A became replaced by vehicular Songhay B (at least in the cases of today's Western and the notorious "Northern" Songhay dia-

Diagram 1.



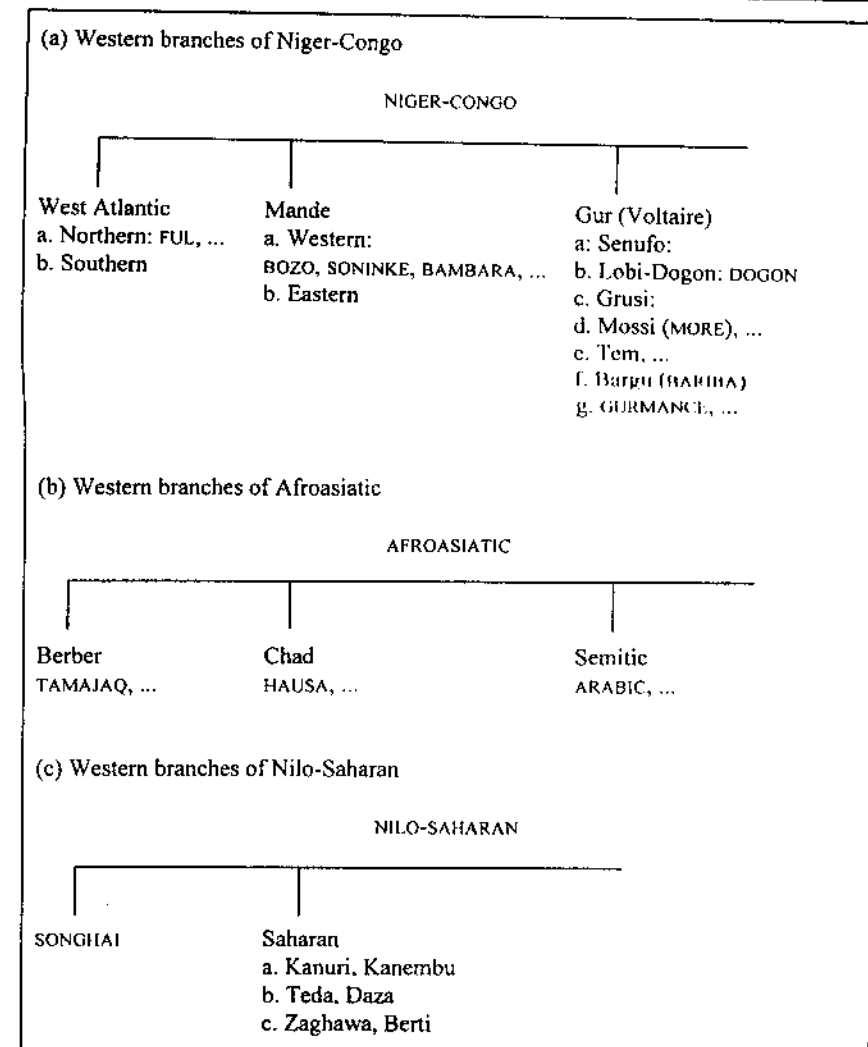
lects — cf. Diagram 1). Consequently, Songhay B became “revernacularized” and took over the communicative functions which used to be the domains of Songhay A. As for non-Songhay  $L_1$ s (e.g. Tamajaq) in stable bilingual  $L_1$ -Songhay B environments, this Songhay B and the  $L_1$  of a given population underwent hybridization according to NICOLAÏ (1987b).

Thus, the populations of northern Songay must have found themselves in a situation where a) the vehicular which they used must have lost this initial function; b) this same ex-vehicular must then have corresponded to a pole of identification among the different groups which used it to a point of preferring its use to that of Twareg (otherwise they would have conserved it!); c) this supposed function of pole of linguistic identification was constructed at the same time it was installed and delimited by new communicational connections in the interior of the nomadic sphere: there was then no longer a need of preserving the ‘functional’ and initial norm ... of a defunct vehicular but on the contrary a developing of the interactive connections between the Songayphone and Berberophone communities, while preserving their respective identities, which is marked by this massive borrowing, systematic but not ‘linguistically functional’, which has been described as a fact of contamination (NICOLAÏ 1989b:55).

This sociolinguistic development was fostered by the fact that immediate economic, social, and linguistic contact with the rest of the Songhay-Zarma-speaking world was disrupted with the decline of the Songhay Empire, the subsequent re-routing of the caravan routes, and the taking over of Hausa as the predominant *lingua franca* at the expense of vehicular Songhay B (cf. Map 3 in section 5).

In subsequent works, NICOLAÏ (1990, 1991) again addresses the genealogical classification of the (vernacular) Songhay dialect cluster as a whole, willing to question whatever has been said about it in the past. According to his latest hypothesis, the whole of Songhay “results from the evolution of a pidginized form of Tuareg reorganized in terms of the typological structure of a Mande language” (1991:40). This does not mean that we have returned to a simple monogenetic (Afroasiatic, for the time being) origin of Songhay, because what we may have — according to NICOLAÏ (1991) is “multiple genetic affiliation”, i.e. case of language hybridization or “mixed” ancestry. Diagram 2 summarizes the received classification of the languages in contact

Diagram 2. The received genetic classifications of western Nilo-Saharan, western Niger-Congo, and western Afroasiatic (based on GREENBERG 1963).



based on GREENBERG (1963) — cf. also Map 1 and Diagram 1 for comparison.

#### 4 The Tasawaq language of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tessemt

Originally situated on the cross-roads of medieval trans-Saharan trade, the settlement In-Gall as such is an oasis southwest of Agades and about 600 km northeast of the capital of the Republic of Niger, Niamey. Tegidda-n-Tessemt is a salt basin situated due north some kilometers away from the In-Gall oasis. Its inhabitants exploit the salines except during the rainy season when most of them temporarily migrate to work the palms and cultivate cereals and vegetables in the gardens of the In-Gall oasis.

In terms of modern administrative structure, In-Gall comprises a larger area as a *poste administratif* within the *arrondissement d'Agadès*. According to the 1975 census quoted in ALIDOU (1988:1), out of 14,885 inhabitants of the area, only about 2,500 lived more or less permanently in either the In-Gall oasis (1901) or Tegidda-n-Tessemt (474), the others were nomadic people herding camels, cattle, and goats.

Among the nomadic people in the area, there are the Igдалen and the Iberogan (speaking Tagdalt and Tabarog, jointly referred to as Tihishit), but also the Fulbe ("Wodaabe", speaking Fulfulde). Among the sedentary people, there are the Isawaghen (speaking Tasawaq; they are called Ingalawa by the Hausa) and the Hausa.

According to the rather complex oral traditions on origins and migrations of the inhabitants of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tessemt collected by ALIDOU (1988:4ff), they tie up with immigrants from Morocco (Fez) who first settled in the legendary town of Azelik, as much as from Arabia (Medina), the latter being responsible for bringing the date-palms to the oasis. In historical times, there have been constant relations with Agades, residence of the sultan. Agades, on the other hand, paid tribute to the rulers of the Songhay Empire.

In the early 16th century, the whole area was part of the Songhay

Empire. It is said that Askia Mohammed was passing through on his famous pilgrimage to Mecca and that he had camped out somewhere near In-Gall and that he left some of his entourage behind who then settled and married in In-Gall. In the times of Heinrich BARTH, varieties of Songhay were said to be still spoken in Agades and its vicinity (including In-Gall and Tegidda; BARTH 1851).

The speakers of Tasawaq (and Tihishit, for that matter) live in close if not permanent contact with speakers of Tamajaq, Hausa, and vernacular Arabic. These languages have contributed to no little extent to the phonology, grammar, and lexicon of Tasawaq (and Tihishit).

Whereas phonological and lexical analyses and comparisons already fill many pages in the literature (cf. references), this is less so for grammatical (morphological) features of Northern Songhay in general, and Tasawaq in particular. For the richly documented instances of phonological and lexical "contamination" (to use NICOLAI's term), the reader is directed to the original sources. For reasons of time and space, this paper will address in detail only the most salient grammatical features which illustrate the "mixed" nature of the Tasawaq linguistic system, entirely based on ALIDOU (1988).

ALIDOU's work (1988) is based on two questionnaires: The first was originally developed for a linguistic survey of non-class languages in Cameroon and contained 221 words and 218 short clauses. In order to compensate for some obvious shortcomings of that questionnaire for a language like Tasawaq, ALIDOU developed her own questionnaire with some 258 clauses. The questionnaires were administered to, and discussed with, native speakers of Tasawaq in In-Gall and Niamey.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.1 Phonology

An outstanding feature of Tasawaq among its Northern Songhay dialect sisters is its tonality which puts it typologically closer to most Songhay-Zarma dialects. In this sense Tasawaq is unique among its Northern Songhay sisters, because the "nomadic" dialects (Tadaksahak, Tihishit) as well as



“sedentary” Korandje are non-tonal: they have a stress system instead which puts them typologically closer to Tamajaq. ALIDOU confirms the existence of three tones in Tasawaq (H, L, and a rare Falling contour), e.g. *bòró* ‘person’, *tùgúzi* ‘tree’, *àlxâyâm* ‘animal’, *há* ‘thing’.

Typologically, the Tasawaq consonant system is the least “afroasiatoid” (i.e. “berberized” or “arabicized”) of all the Northern Songhay dialects. However, in practically all cases in which it differs from the “Southern” Songhay dialects, i.e. Songhay–Zarma proper, it shows correspondences with its Northern Songhay sister dialects, i.e. points towards the Afroasiatic (= Tamajaq) type. The diversity in terms of consonant inventories among all so-called Songhay dialects is considerable. Whereas the consonant inventories of the nomadic dialects (Tadaksahak, Tihishit) generally show high resemblance to that of Tamajaq including rich pharyngealized or velarized sub-inventories, the Tasawaq consonant inventory is less spectacular in this respect; there are, for instance, no pharyngealized consonants (indicated below for Tadaksahak by capital letters) which makes the Tasawaq inventory look more like a non-Northern Songhay dialect as, for instance, that of Gao (Eastern Songhay). Cf.

Eastern Songhay		Northern Songhay			
Gao (NICOLAÏ 1981)	Tasawaq (ALIDOU 1988)	Tasawaq (NICOLAÏ 1986)		Tadaksahak (NICOLAÏ 1981)	
(p) t c k	t ky k q	t	k q	t T c k q	
b d j g	b d gy g	b d	g (')	b d D j g	
f s sh h	f s x h	f s (sh) x h		f s S sh x H h	
z zh	z gh	z (zh) gh		z Z zh gh C	
m n ny ng	m n	m n		m n N ng	
r	r	r		r R	
l	l	l		l L	
w y	w y	w y		w y	

There are some minor differences between ALIDOU’s and NICOLAÏ’s accounts:

(1) ALIDOU postulates two palatalized velars /ky, gy/ to account for

more than thirty examples in her corpus like *kyáb* ‘to count’, *é:kyâw* ‘root’, *gyândâ* ‘earth, sand, soil’, *zálgÿât* ‘left side’, etc.

(2) NICOLAÏ observed the glottal stop /ʔ/ in but one example, i.e. *wà’ázù* ‘to preach’; ALIDOU’s data contain a corresponding absence of the intervocalic consonant resulting in a long vowel: *wáazù*.

The vowel systems tend to be rather homogeneous. Both NICOLAÏ and ALIDOU agree on a system with five short and five corresponding long vowels: *i, ii, e, ee, a, aa, o, oo, u, uu*. As for schwa, NICOLAÏ accepts it as a phoneme outside the system (1986:406). ALIDOU is hesitant about its phonemic status since it occurs in only three forms in her corpus which Tasawaq speakers have declared to be Tamajaq words: *àghárrèg*, pl. *íghárràgÿàn* ‘excrement(s)’, *qáttá* ‘small’.

#### 4.2 Morphology

ALIDOU’s most striking observation concerning Tasawaq morphology pertains to the distribution of clitics and grammatical morphemes (i.e. pronouns, postpositions, demonstratives, inflectional markers, derivational markers): With but few exceptions, these can be linked to cognate morphemes in Songhay–Zarma or they are of a shape which would allow them to be linked up with both Songhay–Zarma and Tamajaq (and are thus irrelevant for the discussion of “mixed” ancestry). The etymological connection with Songhay–Zarma is particularly obvious for practically all of the verbal morphology as well as the pronouns; it links up with the observation that pluralization for more than half of the nouns follows the Songhay–Zarma pattern. Hence the tendency to classify this language among the Songhay dialects.

The few grammatical elements in ALIDOU’s corpus, on the other hand, which show unambiguous etymological links with Tamajaq are part of the nominal morphosyntax:

(a) a set of noun “prefixes” to derive patronymic gender-sensitive nouns (cf. 4.2.3 below),

(b) a set of allomorphs pertaining to one of two major noun plural clas-

ses (cf. 4.2.6 below),

(c) the "genitival" linking morpheme {*n*} (cf. 4.3 below).

Also, there is the use of the noun *ímàn*, pl. *ímànàn* 'self' (cf. Tamajaq 'soul, spirit') in genitival association with a pronoun to express reflexivity:

*gháy wó gháy n ímàn* 'I insult myself'  
 I insult I POSS self

*índì qáddèr índì n ímànàn* 'you hurt yourselves'  
 you(PL) hurt you(PL) POSS self(PL)

Compare also the use of the noun *sè:ráy*, pl. *sè:ráyàn* 'each other' (cf. Tamajaq 'friend') to express reciprocity:

*íri b-gùná sè:ráy* 'we consult each other'  
 we CNT-consult each other

*ásábfyó wów-wów sè:ráyàn* 'the children insult each other'  
 child+PL insult+INT each other+PL

Since hardly any descriptive accounts concerning Tasawaq pronouns and verbal morphology are available in print, we shall present a short outline here, entirely based on the data contained in ALIDOU (1988).

4.2.1 Pronouns

The pronominal system makes use of basically one single paradigm for the various functions (independent, subject, object, possessive); there are, however, three additional pronoun forms for specialized usages:

1sg	<i>ghá(y)</i>	1pl	<i>íri</i>	emphatic	3sg	<i>ígyà</i>
2sg	<i>ní</i>	2pl	<i>índì</i>		3pl	<i>ígyi</i>
3sg	<i>à</i>	3pl	<i>i</i>	imperative	2pl	<i>wà</i>

indep./emphatic:	<i>gháy dà, gháy té</i>	'I myself, I came'
	<i>ní, ní wá</i>	'you, you ate'
	<i>ígyà nòw</i>	'he/she/it is'

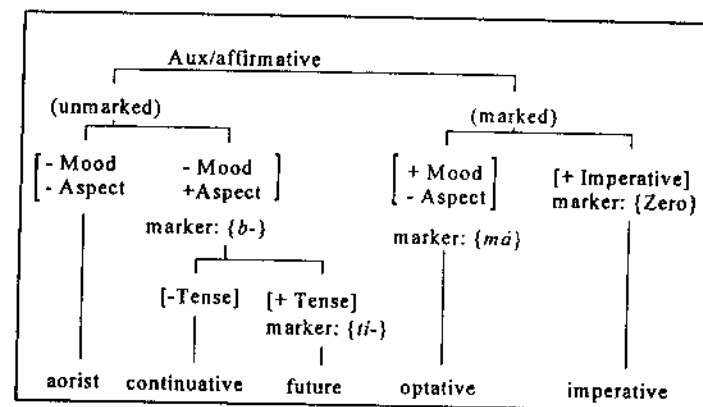
subject:	<i>gháy dáy gòngòr íyó</i>	'I bought eggs'
	<i>ní b-zidà tàrráy gyá</i>	'you walk along the path'

object:	<i>wáy kyár íri</i>	'the woman hit us'
	<i>hánsi nèm à</i>	'the dog bit her/him'
possessive:	<i>à n hánsini</i>	'his/her goat'
	<i>índi n àsábfyó</i>	'your children'

4.2.2 Verb inflection

The narrow system of inflectional verb morphology is characterized by an unmarked: marked dichotomy in terms of aspect (marked: IMPERFECTIVE), mood (marked: OPTATIVE), and tense (marked: FUTURE) as much as by the polarity of affirmative: negative.

4.2.2.1 Primary affirmative inflectional categories

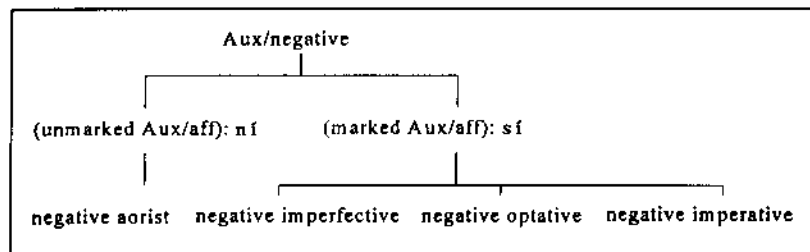


aorist	<i>à té</i>	'he/she came'
continuous	<i>gháy fúr ghá-n-tùgúzi</i>	'I threw my-stick'
	<i>ní b-gyáw àsághàl</i>	'you are doing the work'
	<i>à b-hámbírfi mús</i>	'she fears the cat'
future	<i>à b-tí-báy húgù</i>	'he will know the house'
	<i>íri b-tí-nín á:ri yóyó</i>	'we shall drink cool water'
optative	<i>à má wá</i>	'that he may eat'
	<i>íri má túnú</i>	'that we wash (ourselves)'
imperative	<i>té!</i>	'come!'
	<i>dáq gyá:sù!</i>	'take the calabash!'
	<i>wà gòró!</i>	'sit ye down!'
	<i>wà mún á:ri!</i>	'pour ye the water!'

Note that the optative without subject pronoun may replace the imperative sg.:

*má kóy!* 'go away!'

#### 4.2.2.2 Primary negative inflectional categories



negative aorist	<i>à ní-báy bòró ghó</i> <i>ní ní-dáy gòngòr íyó</i>	'she didn't know that person' 'you didn't buy the eggs'
negative imperfective	<i>à sí b-kóy ágádès</i> <i>ní sí b-wá</i>	'he is not going to Agades' 'you are not eating'

Note that the future marker cannot cooccur with the negative marker. The idea of negative future is expressed also by means of the negative imperfective paradigm. (Exception: the existential verb *bárà* 'to be', cf. below.)

negative optative	<i>à má sí dírrày</i> <i>íri má sí wí</i>	'lest she push' 'lest we kill'
negative imperative	<i>wá sí kóy!</i> <i>wá sí hámbírí!</i>	'don't go!' 'don't be afraid!'

Note that the negative imperative is reserved for pl. only; the sg. imperative is negated by the negative optative without subject pronoun:

*má sí sfiyir!* 'don't sit down!  
*má sí tàghári!* 'don't lie!'

The negative marker {*sí*} appears to be identical with the negative verb *sí* 'not to be' (= lexical negative counterpart of *sí* 'to be' and *bárà* 'to be') used in the aorist. The two existential verbs *sí* (Low tone!) and *bárà* behave quite differently from other verbs: Whereas *sí* is inflectionally defective in-

so far as it is only used in the unmarked affirmative aorist, *bárà* may be used both in the unmarked aorist and marked for [+ASPECT, +TENSE] to convey the temporal notion of future (note the position of the verbs in the sentence):

aorist	<i>wáy káynà à sí</i> (or: <i>à bárà</i> ) <i>bùhú sí:nóyó í sí</i> (or: <i>í bárà</i> )	'a small woman she is' 'heavy sack(s) they are'
	<i>bàggù kúkú bárà nè</i> <i>wáy bárà húgù kúná</i>	'there is a deep well here' 'the woman is in the house'
future	<i>bàggù kúkú b-tí-bárà nè</i> <i>wáy à b-tí-bárà húgù kúná</i>	'there will be a deep well here' 'the woman will be in the house'

In the negative, both existential verbs are replaced by their negative counterpart *sí* (High tone!). Given the behaviour of *bárà* in the affirmative, it is not surprising to find a negative future "will not be" — unlike all other Tasawaq verbs (cf. above):

negative aorist	<i>à ní-sí wáy káynà</i> <i>í ní-sí bùhú sí:nóyó</i>	'it is not a small woman' 'they are not heavy sack(s)'
negative future	<i>wáy káynà b-tí-sí húgù kúná</i> <i>bàggù tí-sí nè</i>	'the small woman won't be in the house' 'there will be no well here'

#### 4.2.2.3 Secondary (periphrastic) inflectional categories

Very much like Songhay–Zarma in general (and many languages in the world), Tasawaq allows for secondary AUX category marking by grammaticalized usage of ("auxiliary") verbs, like *kóy* 'to go'. In Tasawaq, this "auxiliary" verb is used in its [+ASPECT, -TENSE] paradigm and immediately precedes the main verb. This periphrastic construction is fully grammaticalized and conveys the notion of "ingressive" or "inchoative" action, i.e. "be going to ...". The "negative ingressive" follows the internal logic of the system and corresponds structurally to the negative imperfective paradigm of the verb *kóy* 'to go' followed by the main verb.

affirmative ingressive	<i>à b-kóy wá</i> <i>àí b-kóy té</i>	'I am going to eat' 'Ali is going to come'
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negative ingressive *i sí b-kóy gyá:ní* 'they are not going to dance'  
*índi sí b-kóy gyáw àsághàl* 'ye are not going to do the work'

#### 4.2.3 Derivation of nouns and verbs

The derivative morphology of Tasawaq verbs and nouns compares in part to that of Songhay–Zarma, in part to Tamajaq. ALIDOU (1988) describes the following derivative affixes, most if not all of which appear to have cognate morphemes of slightly different shapes in either non-Northern Songhay dialects or in Tamajaq. Note, however, that as far as suffixes and derivative reduplication are concerned, we are dealing with properties pointing in the direction of Songhay–Zarma. When it comes to prefixes, we are dealing with properties also known from Tamajaq.

ALIDOU observed five derivative mechanisms in Tasawaq which are also shared by other Songhay dialects like, for instance, Zarma. However, given the list of 22 suffixes across the board plus reduplication for Songhay–Zarma in, for instance, NICOLAÏ (1983), the following five Tasawaq reflexes are rather poor:

-*kóy* "agentive" derivation of nouns from verbs (cf. Songhay–Zarma -*kō*)

<i>dút</i>	<i>dútkóy</i>	'to pound'	→	'pounder'
<i>kèkáy</i>	<i>kèkáykóy</i>	'to weave'	→	'weaver'
<i>tànghári</i>	<i>tàngháríkóy</i>	'to lie'	→	'liar'

-*índà* "factitive" derivation of verbs from verbs (cf. Zarma -*ándi*)

<i>wá</i>	<i>wándà</i>	'to eat'	→	'to make eat'
<i>nín</i>	<i>nínéndà</i>	'to drink'	→	'to make drink'
<i>tànghári</i>	<i>tàngháríndà</i>	'to lie'	→	'to make lie'

-*tè:rè* "stative" derivation of nouns from verbs and adjectives (cf. Songhay–Zarma -*taráy*)

<i>zèn</i>	<i>zèntè:rè</i>	'to be old'	→	'old age'
<i>sè:ráy</i>	<i>sè:ráyètè:rè</i>	'friend'	→	'friendship'
<i>káynà</i>	<i>káynàtè:rè</i>	'small'	→	'childhood'

-*yó* "nominalization" of verbs (cf. Zarma -*yáŋ*)

<i>gùná</i>	<i>gùnáyó</i>	'to see'	→	'vision, fact of seeing'
<i>wá</i>	<i>wáyó</i>	'to eat'	→	'food, action of eating'

(reduplication) "nominalization" of verbs (also in Songhay–Zarma)

<i>túg</i>	<i>túgtúg</i>	'to hide'	→	'game of hide-and-peek'
<i>dáy</i>	<i>dáyday</i>	'to buy'	→	'shopping'

A number of patronymic nouns in Tasawaq designating ethnic origin, on the other hand, correspond to formations in Tamajaq (and reflect Afroasiatic gender distinction) including their plural formation.<sup>26</sup> On the synchronic level of description for Tasawaq, one could postulate the following set of patronymic prefixes (occasionally accompanied by the plural allomorph {-*àn*} of also Tamajaq provenance):

<i>á-</i>	masc. sg.	<i>f-</i>	masc. pl.
<i>tá-</i>	fem. sg.	<i>sí-</i> <sup>27</sup>	fem. pl.
<i>ámghùt</i>	'a male member of the Tuareg population (Targi)'		
<i>ímghùt</i>	'male Tuareg'		
<i>támghùt</i>	'a female member of the Tuareg population (Targiya)'		
<i>símghùt</i>	'female Tuareg'		
<i>áté:fin</i>	'male Hausa speaker'		
<i>íté:finàn</i>	'male Hausa speakers'		
<i>táté:fin</i>	'a female Hausa speaker'		
<i>síté:finàn</i>	'female Hausa speakers'		

There is another morpheme in Tasawaq which looks like a derivative prefix for verbs which, however, does not point in the direction of Tamajaq:

*tán-* "intensifying" derivation of verbs from verbs

<i>híyáw</i>	<i>tán-híyáw</i>	'to cry'	→	'to cry excessively'
<i>wá</i>	<i>tán-wá</i>	'to eat'	→	'to eat excessively'
<i>zídà</i>	<i>tán-zídà</i>	'to march'	→	'to march excessively'

ALIDOU suggests that the morpheme {*tán*} should not be analyzed as a derivative prefix, but rather as reflecting the verb *tán* (alternative notation: *tó*, also found in Songhay–Zarma) 'to be sufficient, be filled up'. The construction type would be an "auxiliary" one and be parallel to the periphrastic construction of the "ingressive" (cf. above) and, more generally, correspond to the so-called "aspectives" (HAMANI 1981) or "modalizing verbs" (NICOLAÏ 1983) which are amply attested in Songhay–Zarma.

## 4.2.4 Ordinal numbers

Given the fact that Tasawaq does make use of derivative suffixes from a common Songhay–Zarma stock at least for verbs, it may come as a surprise that a handy suffix (Songhay–Zarma: *-ánté*, e.g. *ihínkà* ‘two’ → *hínkànté* ‘second’; NICOLAÏ 1983:30) to derive ordinal from cardinal numbers is not used. In Tasawaq, complex syntactic mechanisms are made use of instead — another striking example of the compartmentalization of the grammar with regard to typological properties of the source languages:

<i>xámsà</i>	‘five’
<i>à-ghó xámsà n wáne<sup>28</sup></i>	‘the fifth’

## 4.2.5 Compounding

Whereas compounding, in addition to derivation by suffixation, is a widespread morphological feature of Songhay–Zarma, this is not true for Tamajaq. Tasawaq again shows an intermediate position in this regard: It allows suffixal derivation on the one hand, but practically does not know compounding on the other! The only example in ALIDOU’s data reminiscent of compounding (and also reminiscent of “cognate object” constructions in other languages) is again a case in point of language “mixing” where lexical material from two different language sources are combined: *gyáw* ‘work’ is etymologically related to a Songhay–Zarma verb *goy* ‘to work’, *àsághàl* ‘work’ is of Tamajaq provenance; the sequence *gyáw àsághàl* is the Tasawaq expression of ‘working, do the work’.

## 4.2.6 Noun plurals

Nominal plural marking in Tasawaq is another striking case of “mixing” morphological sub-systems which originate from different languages. Generally speaking, nouns which have cognates in Songhay–Zarma will use the “Songhay”-way of marking plural, i.e. by suffixing {*-yó*}. Nouns which have

cognates in Tamajaq tend to have more complex plural shapes (making use, among others, of one or several suffixes shaped {*-àn/-àwàn/-tàn*}) in Tasawaq which also correspond to the cognate plurals in Tamajaq. Cross-overs do happen, i.e. nouns which would be expected to come along with a Songhay type plural will have a Tamajaq type plural and vice versa.<sup>29</sup>

In Tasawaq, nouns form basically two groups which one may call the “Songhay” class and the “Tamajaq” class respectively. Nouns of the “Songhay” class tend to have cognates in Southern Songhay dialects, whereas nouns in the “Tamajaq” class tend to have cognates in Tamajaq. But this correlation is not an absolute one. The following examples are selected from ALIDOU:

(1) The “Songhay” class: {*-yó*}

<i>hánsì, hánsiyó</i>	‘dog’
<i>tánzi, tánziyó</i>	‘stone’
<i>gòngòrí, gòngòriyó</i>	‘egg’

Two nouns have been found which never appear to use this plural suffix at all:

<i>bò:sò</i>	‘ashes’
<i>bándá</i>	‘female, vagina’ (but cf. <i>bándáyó, bándéyó</i> below)

There is a sub-class of nouns which apparently only occur with the overt pluralizer {*-yó*} and which may constitute certain semantic domains:

<i>híyó</i>	‘wind’
<i>bé:néyó</i>	‘sky’ (but cf. <i>bé:né</i> ‘top’)
<i>hànjàráyó</i>	‘urine’
<i>bándáyó, bándéyó</i>	‘buttocks’ (but cf. <i>bándá</i> above)
<i>qòlòlíyó</i>	‘penis’

(2) The “Tamajaq” class: {initial vowel alternation *a/e* → *i*; suffixes *-àn, -àwàn, -tàn*}

Although grammatical gender plays no role in Tasawaq, nouns which are of feminine gender in Tamajaq are treated like Tamajaq feminine nouns also in Tasawaq. Compared to the somewhat erratic situation in Tamajaq

dialects, however, Tasawaq appears to have largely resystematized the distribution of the allomorphs.

(a) Nouns with alternating initial vowel and ending in a consonant: {initial vowel alternation, *-àn*}

<i>áskàw</i>	<i>ískàwàn</i>	'horn'
<i>á:bùs</i>	<i>í:bùsàn</i>	'wound, scar'
<i>é:sèn</i>	<i>í:sènàn</i>	'tooth'

(b) Nouns with initial /*ta-*/ (= originally containing a Tamajaq feminine prefix /*t-*/) undergo vocalic alternation of the prefix-vowel; if the noun ends in a consonant, the suffix allomorph is {*-àn*}, if it ends in a vowel, the suffix allomorph is {*-àwàn*} and replaces the final vowel of the singular:

<i>tásbàt</i>	<i>tísbàtàn</i>	'tail'
<i>tágúfgùf</i>	<i>tígúfgùfàn</i>	'dune'
<i>táfàlā</i>	<i>tífàlāwàn</i>	'tent'
<i>táfùràḡkí</i>	<i>tífùràḡkāwàn</i>	'bark (of tree)'

(c) Nouns with non-alternating initial vowel, and independent of final segment type, take any of the two suffix allomorphs {*-àn* / *-àwàn*}:

<i>í:līs</i>	<i>í:līsàn</i> , <i>í:līsàwàn</i>	'tongue'
<i>á:dàn</i>	<i>á:dànàn</i>	'intestines'
<i>ásághāl</i>	<i>ásághàlàn</i>	'work'

(d) Yet another sub-class of nouns ending with a final vowel use the suffix allomorph {*-tàn*}, independent of initial vowel changes:

<i>álámú</i>	<i>ílámùtàn</i>	'filth'
<i>làghání</i>	<i>làghánitàn</i>	'evil'
<i>tássà</i>	<i>tássà:tàn</i>	'liver'

### (3) Cross-over of noun plural classes

Some nouns allow pluralization according to both patterns. In some cases, the only plural form attested in the data does not correspond to the expectations based on the etymological relationship of the singular form. In two of these cases ('small', 'liver'), they constitute more widespread Tamajaq loans in Songhay-Zarma and therefore prefer the Songhay type pluralization.

item	(expected class)	class 1	class 2	
<i>gònsí</i>	(1)	<i>gònsíyó</i>	<i>gònsítàn</i>	'snake'
<i>hànsí</i>	(1)	<i>hànsíyó</i>	<i>hànsítàn</i>	'dog'
<i>há:mù</i>	(1)	<i>há:miyó</i>	<i>há:mùtàn</i>	'meat'
<i>sidáy</i>	(1)	<i>sidéyyó</i>	<i>sidáyàn</i>	'red(ness)'
<i>àsàbí</i>	(2)	<i>àsàbíyó</i>		'child'
?	(2)	<i>hùssáyó</i>	<i>hùssáyàn</i>	'beauties' (f.)
<i>làghání</i>	(2)	<i>làgháníyó</i>	<i>làghánitàn</i>	'evil'
<i>qóttá</i>	(2)	<i>qóttáyó</i>		'small'
<i>tássà</i>	(2)	<i>tássáyó</i>	<i>tássà:tàn</i>	'liver'

For the following noun, it seems that a unique case of "fusion" of the two plural suffixes has occurred insofar as the class 2 suffix allomorph {*-àn*} appears to have been suffixed onto a class 1 plural which already contained the suffix {*-yó*}:

<i>yígdàz</i>	(2)	<i>yígdázáyó</i>	<i>yígdázàn</i>	
		<i>yígdázà-y-àn</i> (1+2)		'straight(ness)'

Interestingly, nouns with cognates in Hausa are not used with their cognate Hausa plurals, but are grouped into one of the two major plural classes of Tasawaq (double class membership allowed):

	class 1	class 2	
<i>kí:fi</i>	<i>kí:fiyó</i>		'fish'
<i>kòrí, kòri</i>	<i>kòrífyó</i>		'arrow'
<i>gíwá</i>	<i>gíwáyó</i>		'elephant'
<i>wá:ri</i>	<i>wá:riyó</i>		'cowries'
<i>yá:ki</i>	<i>yá:kiyó</i>	<i>yá:kitàn</i>	'war'
<i>kùzé:rà</i>		<i>kùzé:ràtàn</i>	'chair'
<i>bùhú</i>		<i>bùhútàn</i>	'sack'

### 4.2.7 Summary of morphological correspondences to either Songhay-Zarma or Tamajaq

Most clitics and grammatical morphemes (pronouns, postpositions, demonstratives, inflectional markers, derivational markers) in Tasawaq can be linked up with corresponding morphemes in Songhay-Zarma, this is particularly true for pronouns and verbal morphology (inflexional, derivational, and

auxiliary). Generally speaking, the transparent “agglutinative” structure of the Tasawaq verbal complex is typologically much closer to Songhay–Zarma than to the highly intricate “inflectional” characteristics of the Tamajaq system. In terms of derivational morphology, however, only a small number of the rich inventory of Songhay–Zarma derivational devices has been found to be used in Tasawaq. Also, compounding as a means to enlarge the language’s lexicon which is amply used in Songhay–Zarma, appears to be practically absent in Tasawaq — just like in neighbouring Tamajaq.

In the nominal section of grammar a fair number of grammatical morphemes (prefixes forming gender-sensitive patronymic nouns, genitival linker — cf. also 4.3 on genitive constructions, expression of reflexivity and reciprocity) show definite and unique correspondences to Tamajaq.

Within the subsystem of nominal plural marking, morphemes of both Songhay–Zarma as well as Tamajaq etymology are being used predominantly with nouns from the same “donor” language — with occasional instances of cross-over usage of these marking devices.

#### 4.3 Syntax

One of the striking differences between Tasawaq and most Southern Songhay dialects relates to word order (Songhay–Zarma generally has SOV order). NICOLAÏ (1983:24ff) lists the following syntactic features as being peculiar to either Northern Songhay in general or Tasawaq in particular:

(1) “The object complement is placed after the verbal radical, as in all the Northern dialects and in Western Songay ...” and he gives the following formula:<sup>30</sup>  $N_1 + \text{AUX} + \text{V} + N_2 (N_3) (\text{POST})$ .

(2) “One notices that very often the substitutive pronoun of the third person singular and plural is expressed as a recalling element even if a noun subject is present ... This appears to be the rule in Northern Songay, where it seems that the construction is the following ...:  $N_1 + \text{REC PRON} + \text{AUX} + \text{V} + N_2 + N_3 + \text{POST}$ ”.

ALIDOU confirms both the constituent order and the (optionally present) resumptive subject pronoun, cf. the simple verbal sentence

*wáy-yó i b-dáy tǔgúzi*  
 woman-PL they CNT-buy firewood  
 ‘the women are buying firewood’

One of the most stunning cases of “mixed” structure is provided by the Tasawaq genitival association of two nouns (already commented on by LACROIX and NICOLAÏ). Whereas in Songhay–Zarma in general the structure is that of Possessor + Possessed without an intervening linking morpheme, Tamajaq has the inverse order with an obligatory linking morpheme {*n*} inserted between the two nouns. Tasawaq (as all Northern Songhay dialects), therefore, has Songhay–Zarma constituent order but the Tamajaq linking morpheme {*n*}. Cf.

Zarma:	<i>wáymè</i> sister	ZERO	<i>táafé</i> loin-cloth	‘sister’s loin-cloth’
Tamajaq:	<i>amghar</i> chief	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>təwshit</i> tribe	‘the chief of the tribe’
Tasawaq:	<i>hánsi</i> dog	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>tásbat</i> tail	‘the dog’s tail’
	<i>mús</i> cat	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>ískyàrà̀n</i> claw+PL	‘the cat’s claws’
	<i>wáyyó</i> woman+PL	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>á:rù</i> husband	‘the women’s husband’

This construction type is generalized in Tasawaq to also include pronominal possessors as well as constructions involving the noun *wánè* to form absolute possessives.<sup>31</sup>

<i>à</i> he	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>hà:búyó</i> hair+PL	‘his hair(s)’
<i>íri</i> we	<i>n</i> POSS	<i>hánsiníyó</i> goat+PL	‘our goats’
<i>àli</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>wánè</i>	‘Ali’s’
<i>íri</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>wánè</i>	‘ours’

## 4.4 Lexicon

Despite its limitations, ALIDOU's data give a fair impression of the "mixed" nature of the Tasawaq lexicon, too:

- 202 lexical items were easily recognized as showing an etymological relationship with Songhay–Zarma (one of the languages in which ALIDOU has native speaker competence) or were at least commonly used albeit of ultimately Arabic or Fulfulde origin.
- 80 lexical items were easily identified as being etymologically related to items of the same meaning in Tamajaq (by testing them on native speakers of Tamajaq).
- 14 lexical items were clearly of Hausa provenance (the second language in which ALIDOU has native speaker competence).
- Seven numerals (from 5 to 10, 20) and two other lexical items ('animal', 'tomorrow') had definite counterparts in Arabic.
- Eight lexical items were not identifiable in terms of their etymology on first sight; however, four of them were later identified by a Songhay–Zarma speaking fellow linguist as being the same or similar to the corresponding words used in more western varieties of Songhay (around Timbuktu, Gao).

An *ad hoc* percentage calculation of the 311 lexical items contained in ALIDOU's wordlist appendices would yield the following figures:

Songhay–Zarma	Tamajaq	Hausa	Arabic	unidentified
66.2%	25.7%	4.5%	2.25%	1.3%

The high figure for the Songhay–Zarma correspondences is explained by the fact that the questionnaires contained mainly "basic" vocabulary. NICOLAÏ had already pointed out on several occasions that this was a characteristic distribution, an observation which had led him to conclude that, historically, vehicular Songhay B had provided only the basic stock of the lexicon for the "Northern Songhay" dialects which was then to be filled up through lexical drainage from the speakers' L<sub>1</sub> (which was Tamajaq in the case of Tasawaq).

NICOLAÏ (1987b:3) quotes LACROIX's (1980b/c) counts of 1,100 lexical items in Tasawaq ("the least 'berberized' of all Northern Songhay dialects"):

Songhay-Zarma	Tamajaq	Hausa/Arabic/...
30%	48%	22%

Using the 200-item "Swadesh list" of so-called basic vocabulary, however, LACROIX arrives again at 72% Songhay–Zarma, and even 78% Songhay–Zarma with the 100-item "Swadesh list"!

Compare these figures to LACROIX's (1971:95) first linguistic account of Northern Songhay where he quotes — for "nomadic" Tadaksahak, i.e. one of the highly "berberized" dialects — the following percentages based on a wordlist of 950 items:

	Songhay–Zarma	Tamajaq	unidentified
verbs	30,0%	53,60%	16,40%
non-verbs	25,9%	65,25%	8,75%

A startling observation — given the characteristic rhetorical device of abundant usage of ideophones in Sub-Saharan African languages — was the total absence of ideophones/descriptive adverbs from the available Tasawaq discourse materials. This absence is certainly not a feature of Songhay–Zarma discourse but is rather characteristic for Tamajaq speakers.

## 5 A scenario for the non-genetic historical development of Tasawaq

If we follow NICOLAÏ's elaborate treatments of the "Songhay case" as such, we are faced with a complex sociolinguistic and historical linguistic situation which is rivalled in Africa not even by the notorious case of Ma'a (or: Mbugu) in Tanzania.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike in the case of Ma'a, the complexity of the Songhay case is aggravated by the fact that the genetic affiliation of the language(s) to start with is far from being clear. As far as the linguistic contributors to the Ma'a "mixed" ancestry are concerned, there is general acceptance of what we mean by its double affiliation to "Cushitic" and "Bantu" (cf. THOMASON 1983 for refer-



ences). Not so for Songhay: The debate whether GREENBERG (1963) was right in classifying Songhay with Nilo-Saharan, or whether it should be genetically linked with Mande (Niger-Congo), is not yet settled (cf., for instance, CREISSELS 1980, and NICOLAÏ on various occasions, cf. references).

The whole Songhay cluster of dialects itself may be of “nongenetic origin” (term used by THOMASON 1983), it is possibly “a pidginized form of Tuareg reorganized in terms of the typological structure of a Mande language” (NICOLAÏ 1991:40), i.e. a “creole”:

None of these indices is sufficient to affirm that S[onghay–]Z[arma] (= Eastern Songhay, Zarma, and Kaado; HEW) was itself a postcreole which issued from the contact between the populations of the River and those of trans-Saharan commerce, but the assemblages thus formed appear to us to constitute a sum of presumptions sufficiently important so that the hypothesis of the creole origin of SZ Songay itself is not unacceptable (NICOLAÏ 1987a:482).

If this is so, then Tasawaq, like other dialects of the cluster, is the result of re-pidginizing and re-creolizing a pre-existing creole:

A stable collection of geographic and sociological constraints has succeeded in introducing the pidginization of a form of Songay (Songay A) which was finally creolized in the form B, the origin of present-day SZ. Causes of the same order inducing comparable effects in historic or quasi-historic times, have promoted a new pidginization of Songay which led to the vehicular forms W[estern]S[onghay], D[endi], and N[orthern]S[onghay] that were in turn creolized (NICOLAÏ 1987a:482).

After so much having been written (largely by the same author who has kept refining his ideas on the issue over a period of almost twenty years), the following tentative integrative and highly complex scenario of the linguistic history of Tasawaq emerges for the outside observer:

Stage I: The development of a PRE-SONGHAY *lingua franca*

L<sub>1</sub> speakers of Mande (Bozo, Soninke, Malinke–Wangara, Bambara) as well as non-Mande speaking (?; pre-Songhay–Zarma) populations along the River Niger (Sorko fishermen, Gabibi agriculturalists, Gow hunters), in addition to berberophones (Sanhaja, Tuareg), arabophones (incl. Hassaniya) and Fulfulde speakers made use of a vehicular *lingua franca* based on a pidgin to

which at least both Tamajaq and Mande (Bozo, Soninke), possibly other languages as well, had contributed. This *lingua franca* (developing probably between 1100 and 1500) served to connect both sedentary and nomadic groups to the trans-Saharan commercial activities under the Mali and Songhay Empires. Whether speakers of Saharan and Chadic languages were involved remains a remote possibility since by the year 1500 AD Wangara traders had moved eastwards (down-river) to found commercial outposts in the emerging Bariba and Hausa towns and linked up with the Saharan- and Chadic-speaking world. This *lingua franca*, non-genetically linked to Mande (Niger-Congo) and Berber (Afroasiatic), could be called PRE-SONGHAY. Large portions of various populations between the Senegal River and the Niger River valleys and up north into the Saharan mountain regions of the Air were bilingual in their respective first languages and PRE-SONGHAY.

Stage II: The creolization of PRE-SONGHAY to become SONGHAY

Probably at some period of the Songhay Empire, the riveraine populations along the River Niger between Djenne, Timbuktu, Gao, and Gaya gave up their original L<sub>1</sub>s (through language shift) in favour of a creolized PRE-SONGHAY which we may now call Songhay proper (corresponding to NICOLAÏ’s “Songhay A”), thereby switching back from a fairly general bilingual situation (L<sub>1</sub> plus PRE-SONGHAY) to SONGHAY monolingualism. This vernacular SONGHAY is a non-genetic “mixed” language owing largely to Mande and Berber and to other regional languages of the vast catchment area of its fore-runner, i.e. the non-L<sub>1</sub> *lingua franca* PRE-SONGHAY. SONGHAY subsequently developed regional variants. The development of these dialects happened, to some extent, at least, under the continuing influence of neighbouring L<sub>1</sub>s of non-SONGHAY-speaking groups, resulting in “language contact” phenomena through language shift from their respective L<sub>1</sub>s to SONGHAY involving imperfect language learning and borrowing from their former L<sub>1</sub>s:

(a) Under the continuing contact with Fulfulde and Tamajaq, EASTERN SONGHAY (Bamba, Gao, Alkaseybaten, Gabero) emerged.

(b) Under continuing language contact with Fulfulde, Dogon, and More, CEN-

TRAL SONGHAY (Hombori, Tinie, Marese) emerged.

(c) Under contact with Fulfulde and Gurmance, SONGHAY KAADO emerged.

(d) Under contact with Hausa and Fulfulde, ZARMA emerged.

Stage III: Re-Pidginization of SONGHAY to become a *lingua franca*

Simultaneously with or subsequent to, the creolization of PRE-SONGHAY to become SONGHAY, one or several varieties of a pidginized variant of SONGHAY kept on being used as *lingua franca* (NICOLAI's "Songhay B") in a bilingual environment at the periphery of the contiguous areas where the SONGHAY-ZARMA dialects had developed in Stage II. There were basically three such bilingual geographical areas:

(a) Upper Niger (Djenne-Timbuktu) — where  $L_1$  speakers of Fulfulde, Arabic, Bambara, Soninke, Tamajaq, Hassaniya, and Eastern and Central Songhay dialects involved in inter-ethnic communication by using "vehicular" Songhay B as a *lingua franca*;

(b) Borgu (Gaya-Paraku) — where  $L_1$  speakers of Bariba, Zarma, and possibly Hausa, used this SONGHAY-based *lingua franca*;

(c) the greater Azawak valley (Tabelbala-Agades-Menaka-Tahoua) — where largely berberophone and some arabophone nomads, but also sedentary Hausa and Eastern Songhay dialect speakers interacted linguistically.<sup>33</sup>

In all three areas, people were using this *LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* (which functionally replaced its *lingua franca* fore-runner, i.e. PRE-SONGHAY) as  $L_2$  to maintain economic and social contact with the urban centres of the Songhay Empire and the trans-Saharan trade, thereby also maintaining linguistic contact with  $L_1$  SONGHAY-ZARMA varieties which might have served as "target languages" for language shifting populations.

Stage IV: Revernacularization of *LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY*

Eventually, on the periphery of the *LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* catchment area, the prevailing complex sociolinguistic situation was simplified. There were basically two sociolinguistically different groups in each of these peripheral areas:

(1)  $L_1$  speakers of SONGHAY-ZARMA dialects who, in a diglossic environment, were using a pidginized *lingua franca* variety of their own language for inter-ethnic communication on the one hand (and were bilingual with regard to non-Songhay neighbouring languages on top of it), and  
(2) bilingual speakers of non-Songhay  $L_1$ s on the other hand who used *LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* as  $L_2$ .

For reasons which may have to do with the decline of the Songhay Empire and reorientation of trade routes, the complex sociolinguistic situations were simplified:

Group (1) gave up its SONGHAY-*LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* diglossia by revernacularization of the latter (i.e. a language-internal creolization towards monoglossia), and settled for straightforward bilingualism with neighbouring languages.

Group (2) gave up bilingualism regarding *LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* through either language shift to the revernacularized monoglossic ex-*LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* of Group (1), or through bilingualism with regard to a new (and economically more attractive) *lingua franca* — for instance Hausa in the case of Borgu and the eastern Azawak valley. This was accompanied by an almost complete rupture of economic and social contacts with the SONGHAY-ZARMA heartland and centres. Subsequently, the revernacularized ex-*LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY* developed regional variants:

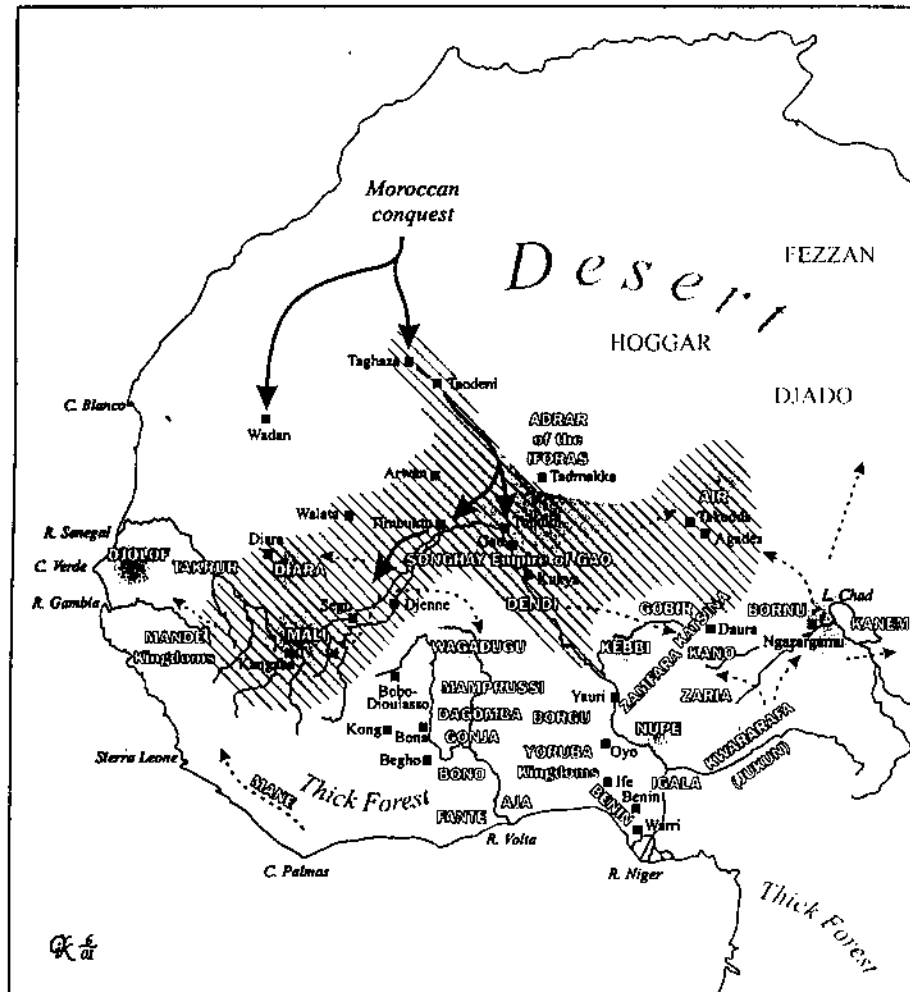
(a) Under continuing language contact among Fulfulde, Arabic, Bambara, Soninke, Tamajaq, Hassaniya, and Eastern and Central Songhay dialect speakers, WESTERN SONGHAY (Djenne, Timbuktu) emerged in the upper Niger area.

(b) Under continuing contact among Bariba, Zarma, and Hausa speakers, DENDI (Karimama, Djugu, Paraku, Kandi) emerged in Borgu.

(c) Under continuing contact among berberophones, arabophones, Hausa and Songhay-Zarma dialect speakers (and possibly PRE-SONGHAY users), NORTHERN SONGHAY (Korandje, Tasawaq, Tadaksahak, Tihishit) emerged.

Under this historico-sociolinguistic scenario, the language under consideration, i.e. Tasawaq, is non-genetic and "mixed" in multiple ways concerning its linguistic ancestry, and presently undergoes heavy (re-)lexification

Map 3. The states of the Sudan, XVth century (after FAGE 1978:20).



from Tamajaq. Under the scenario just outlined, therefore, Tamajaq turns out to be a constant source of input for Tasawaq and its fore-runners (cf. Diagram 2):

- (1) it played a role in the creation of PRE-SONGHAY;
  - (2) it “contaminated” (NICOLAI’s term) local SONGHAY variants (Tasawaq) in Agades (Emghedeshie) and the oases of In-Gall (Ingelsi) and Tegidda through long periods of Tasawaq–Tamajaq bilingualism and in the process of collective language shifts from Tamajaq to Tasawaq;
  - (3) it is still used as a quarry for lexical elaboration of present-day Tasawaq.
- Whatever one’s own theoretical position regarding the non-genetic origin of languages, the case of Tasawaq lends strong support to the methodological claim that the history of a particular language must take into account the socio-historico-political development of the community which speaks it, as was put forward, for instance, by THOMASON (1983) for the notorious case of Ma’a. The present paper serves to illustrate this point. Map 3 illustrates the geographical area and some of the politico-economic dynamics of the Songhay Empire which gave rise to the emergence of *linguae francae* and creoles in the western Sudan between 1100 and 1500 AD.

## 6 Outlook: towards a typology of “mixed” languages in Africa

The status of “mixed” languages is notoriously controversial in historical linguistics (cf. THOMASON 1980). For the African field, Ma’a (Mbugu) is used as “a favourite battleground for proponents and opponents of hypotheses of language mixture, since it is said to have Bantu grammar but not Bantu vocabulary” (THOMASON 1983:195); i.e., once we observe a “mismatch between the vocabulary and the grammar” this can be taken as reflecting “a break in transmission” from “any single parent language” (THOMASON 1983: 197). The characteristic pattern which is also shared by Ma’a, is that of a balanced split appearance: the lexicon points in the direction of one particular language or language group, and grammar in the direction of another. Such type can be graphically represented as follows:

## A. Balanced split: the Ma'a Type

	lexicon	grammar
sources:	`Lx	Ly

In the case of Ma'a itself, this type reflects a particular socio-historical and socio-cultural background of the speech community: "Enough is known about the history of the Ma'a speakers to establish firmly our claim that the mixture in this case resulted from borrowing in a situation of language maintenance, rather than from shift" (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988:226).

Other cases of mixture through language maintenance (which, however, and on first sight, resemble the outcome of language shift) in West Africa may be those of Cena (under continuing influence from Glavda) and Gwara (under continuing influence from Margi) in northeastern Nigeria (WOLFF 1975, 1979a/b), although no sufficient grammatical information is available for these languages to allow any final statement. Also located in northeastern Nigeria is Tera, a mixed language with Bole grammar and Ga'anda lexicon (NEWMAN 1970, and pers. comm.). These three cases of broken transmissions are less spectacular in comparison to Ma'a, and were therefore less easy to discover, because the languages which contributed to the mixed ancestry were genetically related from the start albeit on different levels of sub-classification within Chadic:

(a) Cena and Glavda were most likely languages related on the lowest level of internal Chadic classification, i.e. they are members of the same "Wandala Group" of languages belonging to the Central (or: Biu-Mandara) branch of Chadic (NEWMAN 1977);

(b) Gwara and Margi were most likely languages related on a level above that of a language group: whereas the original Gwara is considered to have been a member of the "Wandala Group", it is now synchronically a dialect of Margi of the "Bura-Margi Group" which also belongs to the Central Chadic branch;

(c) Tera and Ga'anda on the one hand, and Bole on the other, however, are said to belong to different branches of Chadic: whereas Tera and Ga'anda are

said to be members of the "Tera Group" within Central Chadic, Bole belongs to the "Bole-Tangale Group" within Western Chadic.

Textbook examples of broken transmission and language hybridization are the so-called pidgins and creoles:

These languages arose, therefore, outside of normal transmission processes. In most pidgins and the Caribbean creoles, the vocabulary is taken from a single language, and the grammar is not derived from that language or from any other single language. The nongenetic historical development, though not evident in the single-source vocabulary of such a language, is reflected clearly in the grammatical structure (THOMASON 1983:198; emphasis HEW).

These, then, are not simple cases of balanced split appearances. They are unbalanced in the sense that the lexicon is historically traceable to one single language, whereas the grammar itself reflects multiple ancestry:

## B. Multiple unbalanced split: the Caribbean Creole Type

	lexicon	grammar
sources:	Lx	Ly, Lz, ...

THOMASON & KAUFMAN (1988:147ff) describe this type as "abrupt creolization", i.e. creolization without a preceding "definite pidgin state" and maintain

... that abrupt creolization should be dealt with as a special case of language shift, and that both the process and its linguistic results combine characteristics of ordinary language shift (where the T[arget]L[anguage] as a whole is available and is, for the most part, acquired by the shifting group) with characteristics unique to the context of abrupt creolization (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988:166).

Crucial for this type is the lack of access to the (European) target language:

... the African languages were abandoned, but the European languages were not acquired as whole languages by the slave populations. This removes all these creoles from consideration for genetic classification: they are not changed later forms of any parent language (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988:152).

If we attempt to represent the situation found in Tasawaq and its sister dialects among what has been commonly called Northern Songhay, the pic-

ture resembles neither that of Ma'a nor that of Caribbean creoles. Here we find multiple splits in both lexicon and grammar, however, involving largely the same two source languages:

### C. Multiple balanced split: the Tasawaq Type

lexicon    grammar  
sources: Lx, Ly, ... Lx, Ly

The case of Tasawaq itself (and those of its sister dialects hitherto referred to as Northern Songhay, as much as of Western Songhay and Dendi) differs considerably from that of Ma'a and the Caribbean creoles, although it shares certain features with each of them. Like Ma'a and unlike Caribbean creoles, we can assume long periods of bilingualism, i.e. access of the speakers to their respective "substrate" languages (mainly Tamajaq and Songhay varieties, possibly Hausa), before Tasawaq became creolized to such an extent that language shift became feasible. Unlike Ma'a and more like Caribbean creoles, however, was the multilingual (in the sense of involving more than just two languages) environment in which the developments took place. Quite likely, although there is no evidence available, "abrupt creolization" (as viewed by THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988) with some groups of speakers cooccurred with a parallel development of "a functionally and linguistically restricted pidgin" (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988:150) for other groups of speakers, i.e. vernacular and vehicular varieties (to use NICOLAI's terms who had labelled these "Songhay A" and "Songhay B" respectively) coexisted for quite some time in the vast area covered by the Songhay Empire.<sup>34</sup>

The outcome in terms of grammar is the same, of course, as in the "abrupt creolization" model of the Caribbean Creole Type:

... the structure of the emerging creole will be a function of the structures of its developers' native languages. The learners' strategy we have outlined will produce a grammar that is a cross-language compromise; to the extent that the learners' languages are typologically similar, this compromise would include numerous features shared by the various original native languages. This is true of pidgins, too ... (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988:153f).

Not at all contrary to almost all known cases considered to be the result of abrupt creolization as referenced in THOMASON & KAUFMAN (1988) which "developed on a similar typological base: western European vocabulary-based language, Niger-Congo substrate languages" (THOMSON & KAUFMAN 1988:153f), the case of Tasawaq (but also Songhay in general) has developed on the base of typologically highly dissimilar languages, such as Songhay and Berber (in the case of Songhay in general: Mande and Berber).

But unlike in the textbook cases of abrupt creolization of the Caribbean Creole Type where no target language was accessible to the shifting population, the Tasawaq Type involves both (a) access to a target language, and (b) maintaining a bilingual environment. In the absence of direct evidence one could assume that in the early stages of the historical development of Tasawaq, the target language was most likely the vernacular Songhay spoken by the riveraine populations along the Niger and in the commercial and political centres of the Songhay Empire. In later stages, one could argue, when the economic and political ties with Songhay speakers slackened due to the decline of the Empire, and the Tuareg took over political and military control, Tamajaq rose to the sociolinguistic function of target language. This is borne out not only by the well attested politico-historical developments but also, for instance, by comparing the Tasawaq variety spoken in Agades (Emghedeshie) as observed by BARTH in 1850, with modern Tasawaq as spoken in In-Gall and Tegidda today (LACROIX 1975/1980a), which is said to undergo heavy relexification from Tamajaq. This is also supported, of course, by the very fact that Emghedeshie has become completely replaced by Tamajaq (or Ingelsi in some quarters) plus Hausa (in a bilingual environment) in Agades of today.

The language called "Songhay" which is classified by GREENBERG (1963) as genetically belonging to Nilo-Saharan is itself quite likely a non-genetic language of the "Tasawaq Type" deriving from "Pre-Songhay" (cf. the Stage I scenario described in 5) which itself was a Mande-Berber-etc. pidgin.

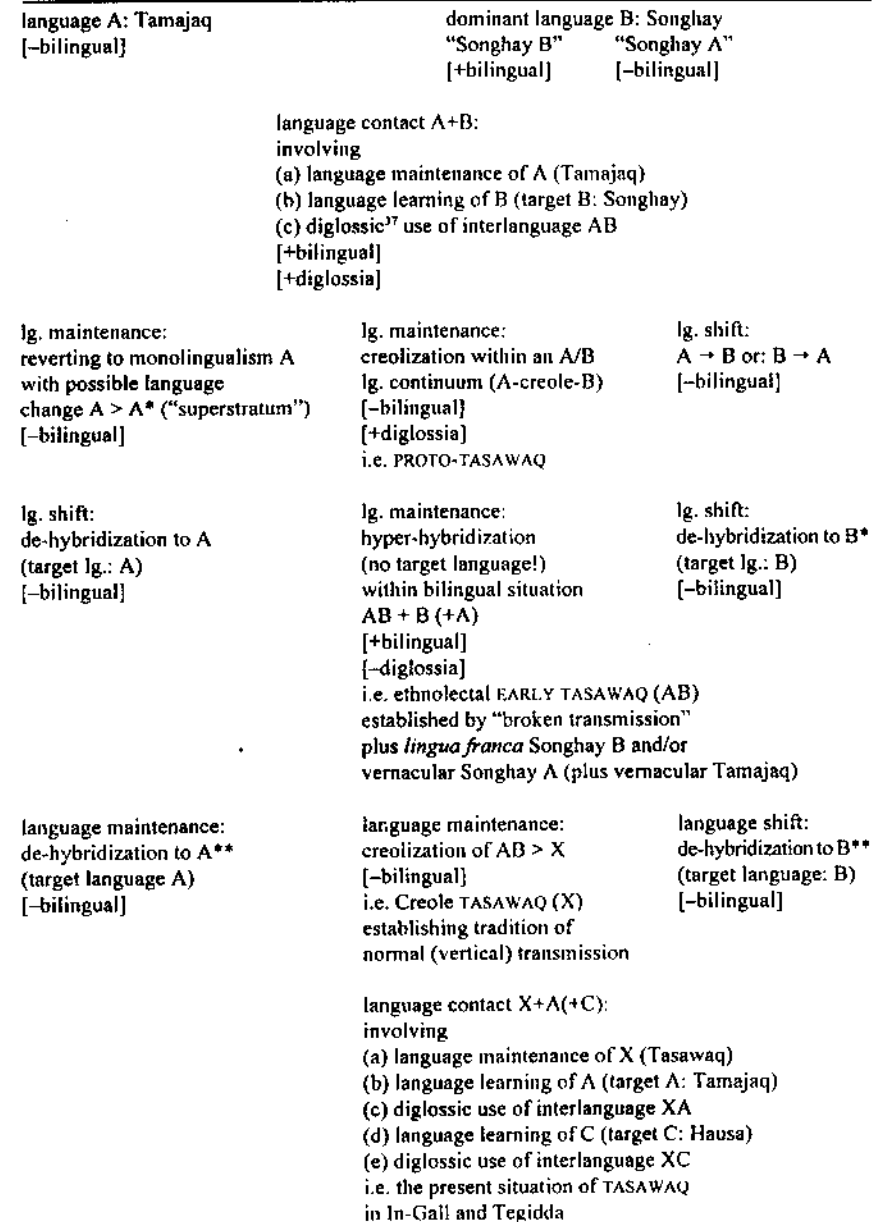
Over the centuries, however, the creolized Tasawaq had become the means of self-identification of its speakers who probably considered them-

selves, or were considered by others, neither "Songhay" nor "Tuareg" — i.e. Tasawaq became an independent language of its own by sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic standards. In this sense we would refer to it as an "ethnolect"<sup>35</sup> of both Songhay and Tamajaq as discussed in WOLFF (1979b).

Viewed from the vantage point of a historical pre-Tasawaq berberophone (Tamajaq) population which eventually ended up speaking Tasawaq, the rather complex socio-historico-linguistic development is captured in Diagram 3.

Given a non-genetic origin for "Songhay" itself: If "Lx" in the typological pattern for Tasawaq were to be identified as "Songhay", then Tasawaq together with its sister dialects commonly referred to as Northern Songhay, as much as Western Songhay and Dendi, are creolized pidgins based on a creolized pidgin! — NICOLAÏ (1987a:482) referred to this situation when he put the questions "Does history repeat itself? Does history stutter?"

If we reserve the designation "Songhay" to a particular non-genetic language, then we should no longer refer to Tasawaq and its sister dialects by using the same designation (i.e. Northern "Songhay"), because these languages are of non-genetic origin, too, also with regard to Songhay. Whether the suggestion to call them Tihitit "language of the blacks"<sup>36</sup> will catch on, remains to be seen. The neutral and non-ambiguous designation which we would like to propose is to simply call the ensemble of these languages and dialects "Azawak(ian)", i.e. languages and dialects spoken in the wider Azawak river valley on both sides of the Algeria–Mali–Niger international borders.

*Diagram 3.*

## NOTES

\*HEW owes his interest in, and knowledge about, Tasawaq almost entirely to the rewarding and pleasant exercise of serving as the supervisor of Ousseina ALIDOU's *Mémoire d'Etudes et de Recherches* at the *Département de linguistique* of the *Université de Niamey* (1988). Mrs. ALIDOU has kindly agreed to allow the data and analyses contained in her unpublished thesis to be used for this paper and is, therefore, attributed co-authorship. It was she who elicited all the data in 1987/88. The analysis was then carried out in close cooperation with HEW. Needless to point out that all shortcomings of presentation in this paper are solely HEW's responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> République du Niger — Conférence Nationale. Commission Education: Rapport sur l'Education (1991:39): "Sont proclamées langues nationales les huit (sic!) langues suivantes: Arabe, Buduma, Fulfulde, Gurmancema, Hausa, Kanuri, Tamajaq, Tassawaq, Tubu, Zarma. Les dix langues sus-mentionnées ont toutes vocation à servir de langues et matières d'enseignement au plan régional et national sur un parfait niveau d'égalité."

<sup>2</sup> No one less than Heinrich BARTH had provided a "Vocabulary of the language of Agades" as early as 1851, a Lt. CANCEL had reported on the "dialect of Tabelbala" in 1908, and again thirty years later. NICOLAS (1938:49) had hinted at the "particular language" which the population of the isawaghen spoke in the oases of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tesamt. The curiosity of linguists of our times was not aroused until LACROIX presented his 1969 paper (published 1971) at the West African Languages Congress in Abidjan. Except for LACROIX himself, only NICOLAÏ, eminent expert on the Songhay language, appears to have taken up the lead prior to ALIDOU's modest contribution.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the term "Northern Songhay" in particular is used solely for reasons of convenience; since this paper is about the notion of "hybridization" (or: "mixed ancestry") of languages, there would be little sense in construing "Northern Songhay" as designating the acceptance of a monogenetic affiliation of these languages to Songhay-Zarma.

<sup>4</sup> Said to be spoken by the idáksáhák (also: "Dahoussahak"), i.e. 18 fractions of nomadic people who live on both sides of the Mali-Niger border around Ansongo, In-Tallaq, Menaka, Aderamboukane, Banibangou and Abala.

<sup>5</sup> Said to be spoken by the iberogan in the area of Tahoua (Niger).

<sup>6</sup> Said to be spoken by the řqdálán, various fractions of nomadic people who live between Tahoua, In-Gall and Agades in Niger.

<sup>7</sup> Said to be spoken by the Dahoussahak (Idáksahak), nomadic people around Menaka (Mali) and Ouallam (Niger).

<sup>8</sup> of the Igdalen and the Iberogan, nomadic people around Agades and Tahoua (Niger).

<sup>9</sup> of the inhabitants of In-Gall and Tegidda-n-Tesemt near Agades.

<sup>10</sup> spoken at Telbala (southwestern Algeria).

<sup>11</sup> Without, however, identifying the origin of the material basis on which his internal classification is founded and where the additional information came from; he footnotes on p. 305, however, some personal communication with LACROIX and S. BERNUS (but cf. NICOLAÏ 1981:14 for a map of "points of elicitation".)

<sup>12</sup> Estimated number about 3,000 according to NICOLAÏ (1983:15).

<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere referred to as dependents of the Igdalen in the vicinity of Tahoua; estimated number about 3,000 according to NICOLAÏ (1980a:57).

<sup>14</sup> Also referred to as Tasawaght by LACROIX (cf. NICOLAÏ 1979:305 fn). Note that a morphophonological rule in Tamajaq would change the word-final consonant cluster /gh-t/ to [g], e.g. \*t-amazagh-t 'language of the Free' → Tamajaq; likewise /t-asawagh-t/ ('language of the Asawagh River Valley' ?) → Tasawaq.

<sup>15</sup> = Ingelsi in later publications, e.g. NICOLAÏ (1980a).

<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere referred to as Isawaghen, e.g. in NICOLAS (1938:49); estimated number about 1,800 according to NICOLAÏ (1980a:57).

<sup>17</sup> Containing the same radical consonants (\*G-D-S) as in "Agades", also referred to as "Uraghiye" (cf. NICOLAÏ 1979:305 fn).

<sup>18</sup> BARTH not only recorded the existence of a variety of Songhay as being spoken in Agades in 1850 which he referred to as Emghedeshie, but also saw some "Ighdalen" (i.e. speakers of Tagdalt) in Agades in 1850 who struck him as rather special: He was told that they were of mixed Berber-Songhay blood and spoke Songhay (cf. BERNUS 1972:105). A century later NICOLAS (1950:46) wrote: "This language (Tagdalt or Tabarog or Tihətit) 'the negro language' is basically of Berber origin, with several traces from Songhai or Zérma" (translation HEW).

<sup>19</sup> The irritation stems from the following mismatches between physical appearance and language affiliation: the nomadic Igdalen were "white", yet they would appear to speak Songhay, i.e. a language of "black" people. The oasis-dwellers of In-Gall were "black" and spoke a language (Tasawaq) very closely related to that of Agades (Emghedeshie) which LACROIX (cf. below) would no longer consider to be Songhay, i.e. the language of "black" populations, but rather link it to the language of the "white" berberophones.

<sup>20</sup> As appears from NICOLAÏ's rather condensed footnote (1979:305), LACROIX himself must have changed his own ideas about the genetic affiliation of the languages in question several times. This is hardly surprising given their truly "mixed" nature and "non-genetic" affili-

ation, which the present paper aims at underlining.

<sup>21</sup> This scenario allows NICOLAÏ to have his cake and eat it, too: On the one hand, the monogenetic origin of Songhay (A) is not threatened (no matter whether one follows GREENBERG's (1963) classification of Songhay as Nilosaharan, or rather feels inclined to link it with Mande). On the other hand, assuming "creolization" for Songhay B as the ancestral language of all (or, as he later admits, only some of the) presently spoken varieties of Songhay-Zarma, the question of monogenetic affiliation of the present-day dialects is elegantly avoided.

<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, in a 1986 publication, NICOLAÏ explicitly uses the expression "mixed languages of Northern Songhay". — Note that this scenario presupposes stable bilingualism; even today Tasawaq speakers in In-Gall tend to be even trilingual, i.e. Tasawaq plus Tamajaq and Hausa, while some are also fluent in Zarma (due to largely post-independence work migration to the capital Niamey).

<sup>23</sup> For these, one would like to get rid of the designation "Songhay": NICOLAÏ (1987:15 fn) suggests the cover term Tihitit "language of the Songhay/blacks".

<sup>24</sup> We may well speak of a diglossia relationship between Songhay A (for intra-ethnic communication) and Songhay B (for inter-ethnic communication).

<sup>25</sup> Note that ALIDOU herself is not a speaker of Tasawaq.

<sup>26</sup> Note that for designating ethnic membership, Songhay-Zarma uses a special suffix which has reflexes also in Mande and Hausa: *-ncè*, e.g. *gùrmà* > *gùrmàncè* 'Gurma individual'. This suffix is not attested in ALIDOU's data.

<sup>27</sup> The onset consonant /s/ can be accounted for by a palatalization rule characteristic of some Tamajaq dialects which changes initial /tʃ-/ to [shf-]. Since some Tasawaq speakers do not use palatal fricatives at all (among them ALIDOU's informants) while others do (cf. the two consonant charts given by NICOLAÏ 1986, integratively quoted in 4.2.1 by giving *sh* and *zh* in parentheses), they depalatalize [shf] to /s/ which is, however, not in keeping with etymology which would require depalatalization to /t/ (cf. the sg. counterpart /tá-ʃ/). Note that contrary to these patronymic prefixes, the same speakers use non-palatalized variants ([tʃ-]) in the noun plurals of the "Tamajaq" class (cf. 4.2.6).

<sup>28</sup> The complex *á-ghó* can be addressed as "relativ pronoun" in Tasawaq, it is made up of the pronoun 3sg. {á} and the deictic morpheme {ghó} 'this/here (nearest approximation to speaker and hearer)'; the rest of the construction is formed by an absolute possessive expression (cf. 4.3).

<sup>29</sup> NICOLAÏ (1983:29) considers it likely that such analysis is historically wrong and that all plural suffixes ultimately stem from a more complex Proto-Songhay \**-ongV*; NICOLAÏ's assumption is not shared in this paper.

<sup>30</sup> For the other Songhay dialects the order is quite different, with the exception of certain transitive verbs: NI+AUX+N2+V. However, the constituent order of Northern Songhay corresponds to that of its Afroasiatic neighbouring languages, i.e. both Tamajaq and Hausa. The use of postpositions (POST), however, would place Tasawaq typologically alongside Songhay-Zarma again rather than Tamajaq or Hausa.

<sup>31</sup> This was also noted by LACROIX and NICOLAÏ for other Northern Songhay dialects: reflexes are also found in Southern Songhay, as NICOLAÏ (1983:27) points out. — NB: Contrary to the Tasawaq situation, both Tamajaq and Hausa have sets of "possessive pronouns" which are suffixed to the noun.

<sup>32</sup> Strangely, NICOLAÏ himself nowhere references the Ma'a case (at least in the works that HEW has been able to consult) — obviously as much affected by the language barrier separating French and English scholarship as are his anglophone counterparts who do not reference his own works.

<sup>33</sup> There might also still have been users of PRE-SONGHAY around who eventually shifted to LINGUA FRANCA SONGHAY for inter-ethnic communication. This would have been, for instance, descendants of members of the Songhay Empire's garrisons in oases and towns like Agades, In-Gall, Tegidda, and possibly as far as Tabelbala.

<sup>34</sup> It is worth remembering that we are not talking about large plantations or even whole islands, as in the case of Caribbean creoles, nor about walking distances (even if it takes several days) between Usambara and South Pare, as in the case of Ma'a; in the case of the creolization of Songhay we talk about a geographic quadrangel with the corners at Djenne (Mali), Tabelbala (Algeria), Agades (Niger), and Paraku (Benin), i.e. beeline distances between about 500 and 1,000 km (cf. Maps 1 and 3)!

<sup>35</sup> The term "ethnolect" was introduced for the result of a particular type of language hybridization in WOLFF (1979b, which was incidentally the very first volume of *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika*). Several types of language contact were discussed based on the experience of two "mixed" languages in northeastern Nigeria. The notion of "ethnolect" implies a conscious strategy of ethnicism-induced compensatory language maintenance (by either "de-hybridization" or "hyper-hybridization" depending on the particular case) under severe stress of language death in a bilingual situation. It was tentatively defined in the following way: "As 'ethnolect' we shall designate any idiom which looks like a variant of a language B and which is spoken by an ethnically identifiable group of speakers who, however, maintain that their idiom is a variant of a different language A. The self-classification as linguistically and culturally independent ethnic group should be corroborated by linguistic ('substratum' evidence) as well as extra-linguistic considerations. Ethnolects come about subsequent to inter-ethnic contact ... and are the expression of ideological reaction to the threat of losing ethnic identity in times of an A-B-language continuum in a young socio-economical society in which B is the language of the economically, socially, numerically or otherwise dominant group" (p. 162, translation HEW).



<sup>36</sup> Cf. note 23.

<sup>37</sup> Following a previous typology based on the sociolinguistic features [bilingual] and [diglossia] in WOLFF (1979b:151), "diglossia" in the situation of A+B language contact ([+bilingual]) shall mean the heavy occurrence of code-switching as a third (mixed, interlarded, mesolectal) code "AB" in its own right besides the two codes "A" and "B".

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**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Das in der Oase In-Gall, Niger, gesprochene Tasawaq wird in der Literatur unter die sog. Nord-Songhai-Dialekte eingereiht. Es handelt sich bei dieser Sprache um ein Kreol, an dessen Herausbildung sowohl das berberische Tamajaq als auch Lingua franca-Varietäten des zumeist dem Nilosaharanischen zugerechneten Songhai Anteil hatten. Die Probleme der genealogischen Klassifikation des Nord-Songhai werden in einem Überblick der relevanten Literatur aufgezeigt. Das Tasawaq selbst wird anhand ausgewählter Beobachtungen zur Phonologie, Morphologie, Syntax und Lexik vorgestellt. In einem Szenarium wird die mehrstufige, nicht-genetische historische Entwicklung des Tasawaq vor dem Hintergrund der Hypothese des kreolischen Charakters des Songhai selbst und der historischen Entwicklung des Songhai-Reiches nachgezeichnet. Abschließend werden unter Einbeziehung des Ma'a, einiger tschadischer Sprachen sowie karibischer Kreolsprachen und des Songhai drei tentative Typen von nicht-genetischer Sprachentwicklung entworfen.

**RESUME**

Le tasawaq est parlé dans l'oasis d'In-Gall, République du Niger. Selon les spécialistes, cette langue partient aux dialectes septentrionales du groupe songhay-zarma. Il s'agit d'une langue creole dont le tamajaq (langue berbère) et des dialectes véhiculaires du songhay (langue dite nilo-saharienne) font parti de son héritage linguistique "mixte". Les problèmes concernant la classification de ces langues sont présentés par résumé de littérature. Le tasawaq s'introduit par des observations sélectionnées concernant sa phonologie, sa morphologie, sa syntaxe et sa structure lexicale. Un scénario d'évolution graduelle est dessiné pour décrire l'histoire non-génétique du tasawaq devant l'arrière-plan de l'hypothèse de la nature creole du songhay même et de l'histoire de l'Empire Songhay. Enfin

sont tentativement présentés trois types d'évolution non-génétique de langues en comparant le cas du tasawaq avec celui du ma'a, de certaines langues tchadiques, de langues créoles de la Caribbie, et du songhay même.

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## FRONTIER LINGUISTICS IN UGANDA\*

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There is a far more profound and widespread semantic sharing between the Nilotic Alur and the Bantu Nyoro, and between the whole cluster of Nilotic and Interlacustrine Bantu peoples than has ever been recognised (SOUTHALL 1971:392).

My purpose is to endorse this judgment by adding to the lexical and other evidence adduced by SOUTHALL and to explore the historical context of the interaction. To this end it will be necessary to establish as far as possible the direction of the transfers across the major linguistic frontier that bisects Uganda.

Most of the lexical material was presented long ago by WRIGHT (1940), a colonial official of wide experience and scholarly bent, who, while reviewing the newly published Nyoro and Acoli dictionaries, came up with a list of ninety items common to both volumes. Only a few of these proposed affinities were less than convincing, and for the collection as a whole chance resemblance can be ruled out. Since the languages in question are (saving the Congo-Saharan hypothesis) fundamentally unrelated, common origin can be excluded also. We have therefore to do with borrowing which, given the number and character of the loans, implies sustained and intimate contact. Truly basic vocabulary is not affected, but the shared items include quite ordinary verbs such as 'begin', 'become soft', 'tell (a story)', 'scorn', 'beg', as well as culture terms such as 'board-game' and 'zither' and a miscellany which includes 'otter', 'cockroach', 'grasshopper', 'borassus palm', 'kindness' and 'anger'.

The Nilotic languages involved are the members of the Lwo cluster, most of them close enough to be classed as dialects, which form one section of