

Dogon Linguistics Comparative Lexicographic Website  
TPI Poster

The Dogon Languages project is a National Endowment for the Humanities and National Science Foundation funded project to document and describe the relatively unknown languages of the Dogon people spoken in Mali. It provides typologists, field linguists and historical/comparative linguists with several interesting sources of data for linguistic analysis of the Dogon languages. For example, the project website<sup>1</sup> presents comparative lexicographic data from eight genetically related Dogon languages and it is being continually updated with new lexical data from project members currently in the field (and is being expanded to include new Dogon languages as fieldwork is undertaken on them). The site also offers linguists unpublished reference grammars and text collections, bilingual dictionaries, and discussions of interesting typological features in the form of squibs. These squibs, currently twenty in number, are an initial summary of the most interesting features of the Dogon languages. Of particular interest to general typology are the 'syntactic tonology of NP' and 'relative clauses'. However, aspects of Dogon phonology are described (ATR-harmony, lexical tones of verbs and other stem-classes, vowel symbolism, and nasalized sonorants and nasalization spreading), as well as Dogon morphosyntax (e.g. nominal classes, case marking, reversive verbs, double-headed relative clauses).

The Dogon website also offers other scientific disciplines and the public a broad range of data. For example, there is an in-depth ethnobotanical study of Mali flora and fauna with over one thousand images of various species. Videos and photos of lexical entries, cultural artifacts, and the Dogon peoples' surroundings are also provided on the website and are linked to their lexical entries. For language learning communities, the Dogon project offers free downloadable and printable PDF bilingual dictionaries. It also offers extensive draft grammars with text collections. The site contains an interface for searching the comparative lexicon and contains a 'thesaurus search' for searching the lexica in a top-down fashion by semantic domain and, within each such domain, various subdomains.

This poster presentation will also provide technical background about the Dogon Linguistics comparative lexicographic website. We intend to make the technology that we have developed open to projects with similar aims and we address and describe the challenges we have faced in this site's development.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dogonlanguages.org>