Languages of Guinea-Bissau

See language map.

[See also SIL publications on the languages of Guinea-Bissau.]


Immigrant languages: Pular (1,200), Susu (3,880), Western Maninkakan, Wolof. Also includes languages of Cape Verde, Guinea, Europe. Information mainly from J. Bendor-Samuel and Hartell 1989; J. Holm 1989. Blind population: 5,000 (1982 WCE). The number of individual languages listed for Guinea-Bissau is 22. Of those, 21 are living languages and 1 is a second language without mother-tongue speakers.


Balanta-Kentohe [ble] 397,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). Population total all countries:
More information.

More information.

More information.

More information.

Bidyogo  [bjg] 29,900 (2006). Roxa and Bijago islands. Anhaki on Canhabaque (Roxa) Island; Kagbaaga on Bubaque Island; Kamona on Caravela and Caraxe islands; Kajoko on Orango and Uno islands. Alternate names: Bijago, Bijogo, Bijougot, Bijuja, Budjago, Bugago. Dialects: Anhaqui (Anhaki), Kagbaaga, Kamona, Kajoko (Orango). Some intelligibility problems reported between dialects. Only Kamona is said to be unintelligible to
others. Important grammatical differences between Kagbaaga and Anhaqui, Kagbaaga and Kajoko. No information about dialects on Galinhas and Formosa islands.  *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Bijago

**Crioulo, Upper Guinea**


**Jola-Felupe**


**Jola-Fonyi**


*Alternate names:* Diola-Fogny, Jola, Jola-Fogny, Kujamataak, Kújoolaak Kati Fooñi.  *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Bak, Jola, Jola Proper, Jola Central, Jola-Fonyi

**Kasanga**


*More information.*
Population total all countries: 1,090. Ethnic population: 690. Near Banyun. Also in Senegal. **Alternate names:** Buy, Cobiana, Uboi. **Dialects:** Similar to Bainouk-Gunyuno [bab], Kasanga [ccj]. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Eastern Senegal-Guinea, Nun

Mandinka [mnk] 167,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). North central, central, and northeast. **Alternate names:** Manding, Mandinga, Mandingo, Mandingue, Mandinque. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Mande, Western, Central-Southwestern, Central, Manding-Jogo, Manding-Vai, Manding-Mokole, Manding, Manding-West

Mandjak [mfv] 184,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). Population total all countries: 315,300. West and northwest of Bissau. Also in France, Gambia, Senegal. **Alternate names:** Kanyop, Mandjaque, Mandyak, Manjaca, Manjack, Manjaco, Manjaku, Manjik, Mendyako, Ndyak. **Dialects:** Bok (Babok, Sarar, Teixeira Pinto, Tsaam), Likes-Utsia (Baraa, Kalkus), Cur (Churo), Lund, Yu (Pecixe, Siis, Pulhilh). Some dialects may be separate languages. Similar to Mankanya [knf], Papel [pbo]. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Bak, Manjaku-Papel

Mansoanka  [msw] 15,500 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). Population total all countries: 17,100. North central. Also in Gambia. **Alternate names:** Kunant, Kunante, Mansoanca, Maswanka, Sua. **Dialects:** Not inherently intelligible with Balanta-Kentohe [ble] or Mandinka [mnk], although called ‘Mandinkanized Balanta’. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Southern, Sua

Nalu  [naj] 8,830 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). Southwest near the coast. **Alternate names:** Nalou. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Mbulungish-Nalu

N’ko  [nqo]  **Classification:** Mixed language

Papel  [pbo] 136,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). Population total all countries: 140,200. Bissau, Cacheu region. Also in Senegal. **Alternate names:** Moium, Oium, Papei, Pepel. **Dialects:** Similar to Mankanya [knf] and Mandjak [mfv]. 3 dialects. **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Bak, Manjaku-Papel

Portuguese  [por] 198,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2005). **Classification:** Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician

Pulaar  [fuc] 265,000 in Guinea-Bissau (2006). North central and northeast. **Alternate names:** Fulfulde-Pulaar, Peul, Peuhl, Pulaar Fulfulde. **Dialects:** Fulacunda (Fulakunda, Fulkunda, Fula Preto, Fula Forro). **Classification:** Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Senegambian, Fulani-Wolof, Fula, Western

Alternate names: Marka, Sarakole, Serahule. 

Dialects: Azer (Adjer, Aser, Ajer, Masiin, Taghdansh). 

Classification: Niger-Congo, Mande, Western, Northwestern, Soninke-Bobo, Soninke-Boso, Soninke

More information.