A grammar of Ik (Icé-tód) : Northeast Uganda's last thriving Kuliak language
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1 Introduction

This book is a description of the grammar of Ik, a Kuliak (Rub) language spoken in northeast Uganda. Since any given language is the cognitive tool and cultural capital of its speakers, knowing a bit about those speakers may help one to better know the language. For that reason, this grammar of Ik begins with a short description of the Ik people themselves. This is then followed by a general introduction to the subject at hand: the Ik language.

1.1. The Ik people

The people whose language is the subject of this book call themselves the Ik (sg. *Icé-ám* [īt∫éám], pl. *Ikᵃ* [īka̤]). Because the Ik word for 'head' is also *ik*, some have speculated that the ethnic name comes from the Ik being the 'head' of a southerly migration long ago. However, an insight from Ik morphology makes this unlikely: Only in the nominative case do the two words resemble each other. With other cases, such as the accusative, the resemblance vanishes: cf. *icé-kᵃ* 'Ik-ACC' and *iká-kᵃ* 'head-ACC'. A more likely connection from the grammar comes from the plural agentive suffix {-icé-} whose form is identical to that of the ethnonym. The plural agentive suffix conveys the idea of 'the people (who…)'. If this semantic connection is on the right track, then the Ik refer to themselves simply as The People.

The cattle-keeping Teso-Turkana (Eastern Nilotic) tribes surrounding the Ik have two names for them, both of which mean 'poor, without livestock'. These are *Ŋíkúlyâk* (sg. *Ékulyakít*) and *Ŋíteusó* (sg. *Éteusóít*). Both terms are also applied to members of the Turkana or Karimojong tribes who are considered poor. The latter term, *Ŋíteusó*, gave rise to 'Teuso', the name by which the Ik people and language have been known abroad up to recent years. And *Ŋíkúlyâk* is the source of 'Kuliak', the title given to the linguistic subgroup of which it is a part, along with So and Nyang'í (Heine 1976).

Due to its derogatory overtones, some scholars have suggested replacing *Kuliak* with *Rub* (a Proto-Kuliak word for 'people'; see Ehret 1981; cf. Ik *roɓa-* 'people'), but it seems the older term has become conventional. Among other Ugandan peoples and internationally, the Ik are known simply as the 'Teuso' or 'Ik' (pronounced [ìkà] or [íkà] or somewhere in between).

The Ik people live in Kaabong District (formerly part of Kotido District), Dodoth County, Kamion Subcounty, in the extreme northeast corner of Uganda's Karamoja Region (see Map 1 below). Their current homeland stretches from Mt. *Lopokók* and *Tímu* Forest in the south to Mt. *Morúŋole* and Kidepo National Park in the north, occupying a narrow, 50 km long/1 km wide swath of ground along the frontier between Uganda and Kenya. A group of several hundred Ik is reported to be living in New Site, Sudan, while around 100 or so more can be found scattered across north-western Kenya seeking livelihood in urban centers. Beyond these, a small community of Ik from one family lives in Masindi, western Uganda. Although in the early 21st century the Ik mostly inhabit the nation of Uganda, it seems in times past they roamed freely between Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Map 1: The Ik language area in northeast Uganda
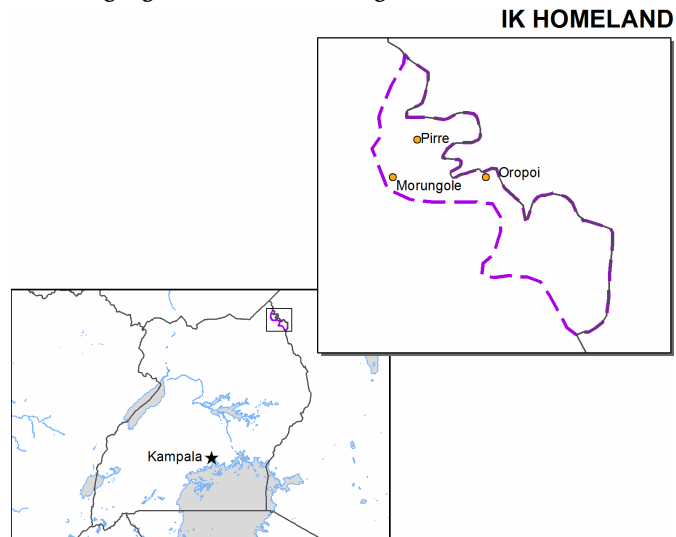
When not living in urban centers like Kaabong (Uganda) or Kakuma (Kenya), the Ik live in *awikᵃ*, 'manyattas' or 'villages'—homesteads enclosed by a high fence made of sticks, poles, and thorns (*maríŋ*). These homesteads may be small, hosting only one family, or big, hosting ten to twenty related or unrelated families. In Map 2 below, all the eighty-one (81) known (as of 2012) current Ik homesteads are marked with white pins:

Map 2—Horizontal view of Ik homesteads from the south

In Map 2, the thirty (30) homesteads clustered on the right side are known collectively as *Tímu*, while the next eight (8) ones to the left may be referred to as *Kámion*. The three (3) in the very middle are in *Lotíɲám*, and the ten (10) just to the left of *Lotíɲám* are in *Lɔkwakaramɔ'*. Finally, the thirty (30) homesteads clustered to the far left are known collectively as *Morúŋole*.

Getting an accurate population number for the Ik has been problematic. Members of the Toposa, Turkana and Karimojong tribes intermingle and occasionally intermarry with the Ik. Numbers of family members are inflated when relief is suspected as the reason for the census. Although figures as low as 1,300 (Turnbull 1972:64) and 4,000 (Heine 1999:11) have been proposed in the past, my impression is that population has grown to at least around 7500, thanks to increased security and access to healthcare.

1.1.1 History

According to a major strand of their own oral tradition, the Ik came to their current homeland from Egypt, down the Blue Nile, by way of Ethiopia. The Egyptian origin hypothesis is highly speculative and perhaps not falsifiable. Tucker saw a connection between the Ik personal pronouns and those of Middle (1967b) or Ancient (1971) Egyptian, and the Ik themselves wonder whether their ethnonym might be related to the Egyptian *Iksos* people. But whatever their ultimate provenance may be, a more sure-footed starting point for reconstructing Ik prehistory lies within Ethiopia. Lamberti considered it the 'unquestionable result' of his 1988 study that the Ik moved to Uganda from Ethiopia (p. 6). He cites the 'numerous conformities' Ik (Kuliak) shares with Ethiopian Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages alike (p. 146), and supposes that the Ik birthplace or *Urheimat* is in the west-central Ethiopian province of Gojjam (p. 14). So though it is still impossible to piece together Ik prehistory in detail, a reasonable guess is that the Kuliak peoples spent several thousand years (Knighton 2005:40) migrating down from south-western Ethiopia and roaming the deserts and desolate hills among the borderlands of Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

The initial migration from Ethiopia is thought to have been motivated by hunger. After finding wild honey and fruits on *Soŋot* mountain in Kenya, the Ik sent young men further south in search of even better lands. Eventually they all moved southward, and settled in *Tulútúl*, on the edge of *Tímu* Forest. After some years, a skin disease (*kodó*) ravaged the people, so that they split up and settled in other areas. Later, raids from slave traders caused them to divide again and migrate once more. This pattern of migrating to escape hunger, thirst, disease, and insecurity has characterized Ik (pre-)history up to this day. As a result, the Ik have become masters of surviving against terrible odds. The good humor they maintain in the face of hardship is testimony to their indomitable spirit and its struggle for life.

By the late 1800s, foreigners began reaching northern Karamoja and may have had contact with the Ik. In the 1950s, Catholic priests evangelized the Ik together with the Karimojong. Then, the colonial British government of Uganda turned the Kidepo Valley, one of the Ik's prime hunting grounds, into a game park in the early 1960s. The Ik's expulsion from the park was soon followed by the famine and societal upheaval so controversially narrated in the book *The Mountain People* (Turnbull 1972). In 1980, a cholera epidemic befell the Ik, killing hundreds. This prompted a widespread scattering of people, separating even parents from children.

What is known about the Ik's past tells a story of eking out survival amidst difficult, traumatic situations. To some degree, these difficulties have continued into the 21st century in the form of a extreme climatic flux, tribal conflict, lack of government services, ethnic discrimination, and political marginalization. Despite these challenges, the Ik are growing numerically and are poised to grow as a culture and society. At the time of writing this grammar, things are improving on many fronts. Inter-tribal violence is being curtailed by disarmament. Government services are coming to the Ik area. And Ik political representation and human rights' awareness is on the rise.

Pending their ongoing health and the security of the Ugandan nation as a whole, the future of the Ik looks brighter than their recent past. To paraphrase a priest-scientist speaking of humankind, "Even in this century, [the Ik] are still living as chance circumstances decide for them, with no aim but their daily bread and quiet old age…After having for so long done no more than allow [themselves] to live, [the Ik] will one day understand that the time has come to undertake [their] own development and to mark [their] own road" (De Chardin 1978:182-195). This grammar is devoted to giving the Ik the cognitive and cultural tools they need to make the difficult transition from an isolated traditional society to a modern, national one… and from there to share in greater human solidarity at the global level.

1.1.2 Ecology

The current Ik habitat portrays a scenario oft-repeated in this part of the world: minority non-pastoralist groups—often hunter-gatherer and/or farmers—being forced to high ground by powerful invading cattle-keepers. This reportedly happened to the Kuliak peoples when the Teso-Turkana groups entered northeastern Uganda. Up to this day, the Ik and the So live in mountainous areas (the Nyang'ía live at the base of a mountain range). Compare this situation to that of the South Omotic Dime people of Ethiopia who were pushed up in the mountains by the pastoralist Bodi who have them entrenched and embattled on all sides (Mulugeta 2008:1, 3). Like the Dime, the Ik are forcibly confined to their mountain perches. But they seem well adapted to them, having learned to exploit every available ecological niche. One worsening problem, though, is the lack of enough arable land.

For the terrain of Ikland (*Icé-kíɟ*ᵃ) is rugged and precarious. Its rocky surface is strewn with granite, quartz, siltstone, and chert—traces of the birth of the Eastern Rift Valley. Altitudes range from 1800–3000 meters (6000–9000 ft.), and changes in height are often dramatic as mini-plateaus give way to steep ravines and gorges. The Ik are famous for their ability to traverse these gorges with speed and agility, especially when escaping enemies.

Moreover, the climate of Ikland is characterized by extremes. Rainy season (*ɔtáꞌ*) typically starts in March or April, takes a break from June to August, and then resumes until December. On a light year, the rains may be scarce, leading to the desiccation of crops and wild plant foods. On a heavy year, the rains may be torrential, eroding topsoil and drowning crops in water-logged soil. Dry season (*ódʑ*) usually begins in December and lasts until March. In a matter of weeks, the sun and wind blanch the vegetation, making the once lush landscape only a memory. Then the land is burned off to expose wildlife to hunting and to encourage new grass growth.

Despite the long dry periods, Ikland is still home to an abundant floral life. Lower-lying valleys are covered in bushland and wooded grassland, while in the higher slopes woodland and forest fade into an Afro-alpine zone. The Ik have a thorough knowledge of local vegetation; this is reflected in the 263 plant names already catalogued (Heine 1999:153–173). They use plants and trees as food, medicine, tools, toys, household items, and building materials. Some of the more common trees found in the area include those in (1):

(1)   *Some trees indigenous to the Ik homeland*

asʋnán	'African pencil cedar'	*Juniperus procera*
áts'ᵃ	'Sycamore fig'	*Ficus sycomorus*
ɓʋkʊ́lá	'Gerrard's acacia'	*Acacia gerrardii*
gáʒadᵃ	'Red-pod terminalia'	*Terminalia brownii*
ɪtɪ́tɪ́	'Flame tree'	*Erythrina abyssinica*
mʋs	'Candelabra'	*Euphorbia candelabrum*
tsʋm´	'Desert date'	*Balanites aegyptiaca*
tsʊ́ʊ́r	'White-thorn acacia'	*Acacia hockii*

Ikland is also host to a remarkable array of bird species. For example, Kidepo Valley National Park, bordering Ik territory to the northwest, boasts an astonishing 472 recorded birds species. Some of the more commonly seen or heard species around the Ik homesteads include:

(2)   *Some birds indigenous to the Ik homeland*

alálá	'Augur buzzard'	*Buteo augur*
fúlʋƙurú	'White-crested turaco'	*Tauraco leucolophus*
itsókᵃ	'Amethyst sunbird'	*Chalcomitra amethystina*
ƙáraƙár	'Green wood-hoopoe'	*Phoeniculus purpureus*
kíryooró	'Crested helmet shrike'	*Prionops plumatus*
kúrakᵃ	'Fan-tailed raven'	*Corvus rhipidurus*
múɗuɗú	'Senegal coucal'	*Centropus senegalensis*
tsitsᵃ	'Gabar goshawk'	*Micronisus gabar*

Although domestic chickens and wild birds provide an occasional meal for the Ik, small mammals supply the bulk of their protein intake. A century ago, Ikland was home to much of the great East African mega-fauna (elephants, rhinos, lions, buffalo, elands, etc.), but over-hunting with guns led to their extinction in most places outside the Kidepo park. Smaller animals, like the following, are still trapped and hunted regularly:

(3)   *Some animals indigenous to the Ik homeland*

borokᵃ	'Bushpig'	*Potamochoerus porcus*
gasóʼ	'Warthog'	*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*
kɔtɔ́r	'Oribi'	*Ourebia ourebi*
kʋláɓᵃ	'Bushbuck'	*Tragelaphus scriptus*
ŋamurʼ	'Common duiker'	*Cephalophus grimmia*
ŋʋrʼ	'Cane rat'	*Thryonomys swinderianus*
ɲól	'Günther's dik-dik'	*Madoqua guentheri*
rógᵃ	'Mountain reedbuck'	*Redunca fulvorufula*
tɔrɔmɪɲ	'Crested porcupine'	*Hystrix cristata*
tsɔ́r	'Baboon'	*Papio cyncephalus*

The Ik names for many more biological species are found in Appendix B.

1.1.3 Economy

The Ik live off the land. At times they have been portrayed as pure hunter-gatherers forced to take up agriculture, but the truth is that they have been both hunter-gatherers and farmers for at least centuries. As adept survivalists, they have learned to exploit every available resource, whether meat or meal. They are omnivores and opportunists, hunting, trapping, gathering, and farming with the seasons. This broad survival strategy has enabled them to survive in an ecologically harsh yet fecund environment.

Trapping (*tɔlɔkᵃ*) is done throughout the year, while hunting (*ƙakᵃ*) occurs only during dry season, as soon as the lower valleys have been burned off.

In addition to trapping and hunting, the Ik regularly harvest wild honey (*dadᵃ*) from tree-hives, rock-hives, and hand-made hives. Another relished treat—white ants (*dáŋ*)—is collected after the first big rains.

When harvested food supplies run low, the Ik return to the bush to forage for wild fruits and greens (*waicíkᵃ*). However, this survival strategy has been constrained by regional insecurity. Not only does the bush provide meat, leather, honey, and greens, it also supplies grass (*kuᵃ*), sticks (*kɛditín*), poles (*titíríkᵃ*), and bark fibers (*simitín*) for building or renovating houses, fences, and granaries. And when an Ik needs quick cash, they may sell these materials to the neighboring Dodoth or Turkana who are eager to buy.

It is often reported that the Ik have no livestock. While this is presently true, it has not long been the case. Before the 1970s, when spears and old rifles were the weapons of the day, the Ik still kept herds of cows, goats, and sheep. Today, however, the Ik keep no domestic animals larger than dogs and chickens longer than a few days or weeks. If any are acquired at all, they are soon either given to a Dodoth or Turkana friend for safe-keeping in his herd or killed and eaten. Otherwise, they will be stolen away. The Ik miss their herds of livestock and often dream of a future time when they can again eat meat and butter and drink milk to their satisfaction.

Farming (*tɔkɔbᵃ*) is the main economic activity of the Ik. It is an all-consuming effort that takes up much of the year and requires the contribution of all family members. The Ik cultivate sorghum (*ŋám*), finger millet (*rébᵃ*), and maize (*ɲaɓuraˈ*) as staple crops and supplement these with pumpkins (*kaideˈ*), beans (*moriaᵃ*), and greens (*waicíkᵃ*) of various kinds. The hard labor of agriculture is often done is groups of men and/or women. The payment for group work is typically home-brew sorghum or maize beer (*mɛs*). Harvested crops that are not immediately consumed are stored in granaries (*lódúrúikᵃ*). The centrality of farming to the Ik is ritualized in the agricultural ceremonies they hold throughout the year. For example:

(4) *Ik agricultural ceremonies*

ɪnúnúmɛ́s	'ceremony for the first harvest'
iróríkés	'ceremony for opening the harvest'
itówéés	'ceremony for blessing the seeds'
dzíberika-mɛs	'ceremony for blessing farming tools'

Before the advent of the AK-47 rifle and the chaos it has caused around Ikland, the Ik used to carry on successful trade (*dzígwᵃ*) with the Turkana from Kenya. The Ik would exchange their snuff tobacco (*lɔ́tɔ́bᵃ*), decorated gourds (*ɓolóikᵃ*), and grains (*edᵃ*) for the Turkana's milk (*ídwᵃ*), meat (*em*), animals (*ínwᵃ*), clothing (*kwázikᵃ*), and jewelry (*ŋábitikᵃ*). In times of need, the two tribes could get what they did not have in exchange for what they had. Even though this trade remains today to a limited extent, the region's violence has eroded a certain level of trust between the two groups.

1.1.4 Society and culture

The seven thousand or so Ik may be divided up on the basis of patriclan, family, gender, age, or government administrative unit. The twelve traditional clans, listed in (5), are exogamous, patrilineal, and patrilocal. When a particular clan gets too big, it can be divided into two, as in:

(5) *Ik patriclans*

Sigétia I	Ŋíɗɔtsa
Sigétia II	Télékᵃ I
Komokua I	Télékᵃ II
Komokua II	Gaɗukúɲ
Ɲɔrɔbat	Ŋíbɔ́ŋɔrana
Iléɲí-ikᵃ	Úzɛtᵃ

Clans are tied to certain areas historically, but because Ik are required to marry outside their clan, clan members may end up in different territory. A newly married couple starts their own nuclear family (*ts'adɨ́-ékwᵃ*, lit. 'fire-

eye' or 'hearth'), building a homestead either attached to the bridegroom's parents' village or in a new, separate spot. Clan and family ties are strong, to the point that kinship relations form the backbone of Ik society.

Men and women have fairly clear-cut divisions of labor. Men protect the family, hunt, trap, farm, cut and bring trees from the forest, and build fences and houses. Women fetch water and firewood, cook and clean, farm, thatch houses, and raise children. Fathers and mother both discipline children. Not too long ago, the Ik further divided themselves according to age-groups or age-sets. Each age-group had a totem based on a particular animal. Each age-group had its own rites of initiation, activities, benefits, and duties. Today, with the influence of modern education and forms of Christianity leading to cultural apathy, the age-group system has sadly been mostly abandoned. These age-groups included the following (Heine 1999):

(6)   *Ik age-groups*

Basaúr	'Eland'
Gasar	'Buffalo'
Gwaíts'ᵃ	'Giraffe'
Kaɗokóⁱ	'Vervet Monkey'
Koɗowᵃ	'Gazelle'
Leweɲ	'Ostrich'
Rágwᵃ	'Ox'

Traditional patriclan and family divisions are often centered around homesteads clustered into units called 'villages'. On top of this organization, the Ugandan government has lain its own administrative system. This system starts at the 'village' and then goes up through wards, parishes, subcounties, and so on up to the district level. The newly founded (2010) Kamion Subcounty comprises all the Ik population and is divided into five parishes: Kapalu, Timu, Kamion, Lokwakaramoe, and Moruŋole.

Traditionally, the male elders ruled Ik society. Elderly woman gave input when invited. Men can become elders on the basis of age but also influence or ability to speak well publicly. The elders built a system of taboos, fines for breaking taboos, and punishments for wrong-doing. Since British rule more than a hundred years ago, the Ik also have had government-appointed or popularly elected Ik as officials. These include Villages Counselors and Parish Chiefs. They have official authority but comparatively little real authority among the people. The two systems of rule now coexist and conflict in Ikland. People are not always sure which system to refer to when a crime has been committed. Traditional punishments like caning are discouraged by the government whose own judicial procedures are corrupt. So unfortunately, true justice is rarely upheld for the victims of crimes.

In terms of religion, the Ik practice what has been generally called African Traditional Religion (ATR). This religion involves a sky-god called *Didi-Gwarí*, literally 'weather-top', who is mostly associated with benevolent or malevolent weather patterns and the effects they have on the Ik's livelihood. The Ik can influence this god through prayer (*wáán*) and sacrifice (*síts'ᵃ*).

Various forms of Christianity are now intermingled with traditional Ik religion: Roman Catholicism from the mid-20th century, Anglicanism and Pentecostalism from the early 21st century. Although the supreme God of Christianity can be translated into Ik as *Didi-Gwarí*, it is more commonly rendered *Nakúj*, after the sky-god *Akuj* of the Karimojong and Turkana.

While *Didi-Gwarí* governs the affairs of the skies, it is the lesser gods (*nakújiicíkᵃ*) and evil spirits (*nɛkípyɛ́ɪkᵃ*) who meddle in the daily affairs of people. More than the great Weather-Top sky-god, these lesser spirits can be manipulated by skilled practitioners, for either good purposes like healing or evil purposes like killing. Those Ik who are skilled at using traditional herbs (*cémɛ́rɪkᵃ*) for healing are called *ŋkwaatikwᵃ*. And those who use charms, amulets, and other devices to curse or hex another are called *suɓɛ́sí-ikᵃ*. These hexers are often paid to carry out revenge.

In Ik belief, spirits can also be embodied, and their embodiments seem to be ambiguous in regard to their intent toward humankind. Stories circulate among the Ik about the *kíjá-wikᵃ*, or 'earth-children': small, often light-skinned humanoid creatures seen on paths or among trees. While not outright dangerous, these forest-fairies often warn Ik settlers against settling in their territory. Another embodiment is the *badi-am*, a 'wizard' or 'sorcerer'. Typically spoken of as a human, these mysterious figures are said to move about at night, haunting villages and doing things weird and fantastic. They are more humorous than dangerous. Owls (*lófúkᵃ*) are believed to be wizards transforming themselves into birds, and hyenas (*haí*) are thought to be the animal that wizards travel around on at night.

The strong belief among the Ik that physical effects in their lifeworld have spiritual causes, often initiated by other humans manipulating the spirits, has led to a culture of superstition. Where one might expect conventional wisdom, for example in the realm of child-rearing, one gets instead superstitions encapsulated in short sayings. Consider the following:

(7) *Na ima zɛkwétɔɔ gwaséé na ŋʋésíɛɛ, baduƙota ŋwaátᵃ.*
  If a child sits on a grinding stone, his or her mother will die.

  Máá kɔkída asaka nɛ́ɛ́ iídee ho-akɔ́kᵉ, ipédída as.
  Don't close the door when you're inside, lest you bewitch yourself.

  Cɛma cíkóroiko sédikee ŋʋra didia sédikoo díí.
  Fighting over garden boundaries will stop rain in those gardens.

In addition to superstitions, prohibitions or taboos also figure prominently in Ik daily life. These taboos play an important role in governing the society and avoiding conflict. Breaking a prohibition usually requires the offender to pay a fine to the elders or those offended. The following are some examples of prohibitions:

(8)   *Some Ik prohibitions*

bɔsés	against fining children or youth
cuᵉ	against failing to give water to elders first
dɛ	against failing to give leg-meat to elders
ifófóés	against eating the first harvest secretly
imwáŋón	against seeing your mother-in-law

While such taboos remain salient in the society overall, their power is lessening as the younger generations embrace modern, homogenized, and Christianized Ugandan national culture. Inevitably, the old spiritual ways of parents and ancestors are increasingly being seen as strange and irrelevant.

1.2   The Ik language

The Ik people call their language *Icé-tód* [ītʃé-tôd̪ˋ] (Ethnologue code *ikx*), meaning literally 'Ik-talk'. It is the mother-tongue of approximately 7,500 people. The neighboring Teso-Turkana peoples call the language *Ŋáteusó*, and on a recently created page of the Swahili Wikipedia (http://sw.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiik), the language received the Swahili name *Kiik*. In keeping with scholarly convention and for the sake of brevity, the language is referred to simply as *Ik* throughout the rest of this grammar.

1.2.1 *Classification*

Greenberg (1963) is the purportedly the source of the original 'Kuliak Hypothesis' which placed Ik and Nyang'ía into a linguistic cluster based on observed shared traits (Fleming 1983:426). Heine (1976) elaborated on this hypothesis with a comparative grammar sketch and internal reconstruction of the group he called *Kuliak* consisting of Ik, Nyang'ía, and So/Tepeth. Since then, the internal linguistic relationship between the Kuliak languages has never been seriously questioned in the literature (Fleming 1983:426). But, amazingly, no less than six different external classifications for Kuliak have been proposed over the last fifty years. These conflicting classifications and some of the linguists who have supported them are presented below:

(9)   *Conflicting classifications of Kuliak*

  ❖ Afroasiatic, 'Fringe' Cushitic—Tucker 1967a, 1967b, 1971–3. This classification was based on, among other things, supposed similarities between Ik and Ancient Egyptian personal pronouns. Ik's elaborate case system also suggests an Afroasiatic affiliation, but this could just as likely be from sustained language contact.

  ❖ Afroasiatic, East Cushitic—Lamberti 1988. Although Lamberti never actually claimed that Kuliak is related to Cushitic genetically, he provides ample lexical and morphological evidence demonstrating at least a significant and long-term cultural contact between Kuliak and Cushitic.

  ❖ Nilo-Saharan, East Sudanic—Greenberg 1963, Ehret 1981a, 1981b, 1989 (in a modified form), 2001, Fleming 1983, Lewis 2013. Evidence supporting this classification includes a high percentage of lexical cognates with Eastern Nilotic (and Western and Southern Nilotic to a lesser degree), as well as shared morpho-syntactic traits with the larger Nilo-Saharan phylum.

  ❖ Nilo-Saharan, 'Satellite-Core'/independent—Bender 1976b, 1989, 1996, Knighton 2005, Dimmendaal 2011.

  ❖ Nilo-Saharan, Northeastern branch—Dimmendaal 2013. This classification is based on traits shared between Kuliak and Nilo-Saharan languages, e.g. an accusative case marker *ka/ga*, derivational verbal prefixes, and the causative ɪ-/i- which is considered a stable diagnostic of Nilo-Saharan.

  ❖ Unclassified—Gulliver 1952, Laughlin 1975, Heine 1976, 1999, König 2002. Due to conflicting or insufficient evidence, these linguists believe a sure classification cannot yet be made.

If these differing classifications are any indication, the Kuliak languages truly are "an enigma in African linguistics" (Carlin 1993:4)

The purpose of this grammar is not to advance another classificatory hypothesis for Kuliak. But nonetheless, it is hoped that the insights gained from this study will get the problem closer to its resolution. For a variety of reasons, there seems to be a bias in the literature toward a Nilo-Saharan classification for Ik (and Kuliak). The question really has to do with what it means for a language to be related to another. If, as has been pointed out in Ehret (1981a) and Fleming (1983), a larger percentage of Ik phonological, morphological, and lexical traits can be linked to Nilo-Saharan than to Afroasiatic, is that sufficient evidence for positing a genetic relationship with Nilo-Saharan? Is the ample counter-evidence linking Ik to Cushitic (e.g. Lamberti 1988) or Omotic not convincing because of lower percentages?

Without going into great detail, my impression after completing this study of Ik grammar is that Ik—and Kuliak by extension—should not be pronounced Afroasiatic or Nilo-Saharan at this time. This statement no doubt puts me in the camp of 'splitters' who resist higher-level classifications before strongly established sub-groupings (cf. Blench 2010). I have taken note of the high number of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical traits tying Ik to Nilo-Saharan, particularly Eastern and Southern Nilotic. But I have also traced a growing number of morphemes to both Cushitic and Omotic. Then there remains, of course, a number of affixes and lexemes for which no areal parallels have been identified.

To summarize, I believe that the Ik language is a yet unclassifiable ancient language originating somewhere in Ethiopia that has had millennia of contact with both Afroasiatic and Nilo-Saharan. This sustained contact has left traces in the form of linguistic 'genes' or 'traits' shared with both phyla. In recent centuries, a particularly influential contact with Eastern Nilotic languages led to a massive influx of vocabulary and calqued grammatical structures. Like Shabo in Ethiopia, Ik's linguistic traits straddle at least two language phyla, and distinguishing contact versus genetic influence will be extremely difficult. These cross-phyletic resemblances must be exhaustively identified and catalogued to see what remains of any old Kuliak substrate.

1.2.2 Typology

The difficulty in classifying Ik genetically stems largely from its unique and eclectic typological profile among other languages in East Africa. This typological profile is summarized below and illustrated with an annotated text. The goal of this section is to give the reader an overall impression of the language—a sort of typological *Gestalt*—in case there is no time to read through each chapter in detail. The overview begins with phonology and then proceeds through morphology, syntax, and finally the annotated text.

In terms of phonology, Ik has thirty-nine (39) contrastive sounds: thirty (30) consonants and nine (9) vowels. Consonants made with pulmonic airstream include plosives, affricates, fricatives, liquids, nasals, and glides. Those made with glottalic airstream include implosives and ejectives. The three lateral fricatives and ejectives Ik once used are now almost entirely lost. Eight of the nine vowels consist of [+ATR]/[-ATR] pairs that operate in a [+ATR]-dominant vowel harmony system. The low vowel /a/ is opaque but can be lexically (morphologically) specified with either [ATR] value.

The rightward edge of an Ik phonological phrase is strictly observed. This means that the final segment of any word or morpheme, whether consonant or vowel, is reduced before a pause. In this reduction, consonants may be partially devoiced and/or unreleased, while vowels are usually fully devoiced or deleted. Devoiced consonants and vowels are allophonic, not phonemic. Other allophonic changes observed among consonants include nasal assimilation, place assimilation, implosivization, and debuccalization, while other allophones among vowels arise from raising and glottalization. At the juncture of morphemes, certain consonants may be deleted and vowel may assimilate partially or totally to nearby vowels.

The template (C)V can generate all lawful phonological syllables in Ik, and the concatenation of morphemes may require resyllabifications in the form of vowel epenthesis, inter-consonantal syncope, vowel deletion, haplology,

desyllabification/compensatory lengthening, and metathesis. At the surface level, the template (C)V(V)(C) generates all lawful phonetic syllables.

Ik is a tonal language with two underlying tone levels: H and L. Ik has lexical tone though few tonal minimal pairs. There is no grammatical tone in the sense of a morpheme made up solely of a tonal autosegment. However, tone changes do accompany various segmental morphemes. H-tone may surface phonetically as high, high-falling, or downstepped high pitch. L-tone may surface as low, low-falling, or mid pitch. Voiced obstruents function pervasively as depressor consonants, pulling the pitch of a preceding high tone to high-falling, mid, or low pitch. Downdrift occurs, as well as depressor-consonant induced downstep. All noun and verb roots have a lexically assigned tone melody whose surface realization may change according to grammatical context. Stem-level and phrase-level tonal processes are complex and appear to count metrical feet in the (re)assignment of tones. At the clause level, at least three intonational patterns can be observed: the indicative, interrogative, and the 'solicitive'.

Morphologically, Ik is mostly agglutinative. Roots and affixes can typically be separated out linearly. Except for lexicalized prefixes on words borrowed from other languages, Ik is exclusively suffixing. On the continuum between analytic and polysynthetic, Ik ranks as moderately synthetic: Only three suffixes can be attached to noun roots, while up to six can be attached to verb roots (one more if one counts root reduplication).

In terms of form, verb roots tend to have a (V)(C)VC syllabic shape. Verb roots can be partially or fully reduplicated, though only full reduplication is productive. Ik verbs may be intransitive, transitive, ditransitive, or ambitransitive. Tonal verbal minimal pairs signify only slight semantic differences, and a small subset of verbs are inherently pluractional.

A basic morphological division in the verbal system is realis-irrealis. This division is posited more on the basis of morphology than semantics. Other

verbal extensions include suffixes to nominalize the verb, give it directional deixis, subject agreement, or non-core argument reference. And yet other suffixes give the verb modal, aspectual, valency-changing, or polarity properties. Most attributive (descriptive) notions are handled by intransitive 'adjectival' verbs in Ik. Tense, contrary to aspect and modality, is communicated by clitics and lays out a three-level time deixis in both the past and non-past. Ik uses a variety of strategies to express epistemic status.

The majority of Ik nouns have a CVC(V) or CVCVC(V) syllable shape. Roughly one third of the nominal lexicon begins with the Teso-Turkana gender prefix *ɲV-* (or one of its locative allomorphs) which as been lexicalized in Ik. Noun roots may also be partially or fully reduplicated, though neither strategy is productive in the language. Each noun has a lexical tone melody that can change in various morphological and syntactic contexts. Nominal suffixes include a two types of singulative, five types of plurative and eight case endings. The language's limited noun suffixation is counterbalanced by productive (pro-)nominal compounding.

Case—an interface of phonology, morphology, syntax—is a pan-systemic feature of Ik grammar. Not only must every noun be inflected for case, but even some of the verbal suffixes appear to be grammaticalized case markers. The Ik case system is split-accusative: Direct objects are marked in the nominative case with 1/2-person subjects and in the accusative with 3-person subjects. In the Ik system, eight cases are observed: nominative, instrumental, ablative, genitive, accusative, dative, copulative, and oblique.

Nouns and verbs represent the two open lexical word classes in Ik. Other, closed word classes include the pronouns, quantifiers, demonstratives, adverbs, conjunctions, interjections, infantile imperatives, ideophones. The seven personal pronouns incorporate three persons, three numbers, and an inclusive/exclusive distinction in first person plural. Non-verbal quantifiers and adverbs exist but are very few. Demonstratives provide spatial deixis in three degrees of distance (near/medial/far) and temporal deixis in four

degrees of time (tense). Other demonstratives provide anaphoric reference for either actual discourse or a shared deictic context. Lastly, Ik makes wide use of ideophones to colorfully enhance the meaning of verbs.

In noun phrases, modifiers follow the head noun. Modifiers consist of genitive noun phrases, adjectival verbs, quantifiers, and other relative clauses. Relative pronouns mark the number of their noun head as well as the tense of the predicate in the relative clause. The fullest statement of the 'common argument' of a main and relative clause is in the main clause. Like in other subordinate clauses, the syntax of relative clauses is marked.

The basic, unmarked constituent order of Ik main clauses is VSO (VS/VAO), but SVO is attested in subordinate clauses. In a main clause, the verb comes first, followed by a tense clitic (if present) and then the subject and object(s) if explicitly mentioned (both subjects and objects may be left implicit in Ik.) Peripheral arguments come next, followed by any adverbs.

Clause chaining is a definitive aspect of Ik discourse. An initial controlling clause sets the TAM context for the chain of clauses to follow. Clause chains may consist of one or many more sequential clauses or one or two simultaneous clauses. Chained simultaneous clauses may be used as a complementation strategy and in bi-clausal comparative constructions.

The Ik lexicon exhibits several recognizable substrata. Perhaps the oldest substratum can simply be called 'Ik' since it has yet to be tied to any other subgroup within Africa. Ik of course shares numerous lexemes with the other Kuliak languages, Nyang'ía and So. A handful of lexemes have parallels in Didinga (Surmic). A fair number of Ik lexemes appear to be pre- or proto-Nilotic, while very many more are obviously cognate with forms in Eastern, Southern, and even Western Nilotic. A substantial number of core lexemes are also traceable to Afroasiatic Cushitic languages like Afar/Saho, Dhaasanac, Ts'amakko, and West Rift Cushitic. Finally, English (Germanic) and Swahili (Bantu) have in recent centuries loaned quite a few lexemes.

In conclusion, perhaps some of the most typologically interesting things about Ik are its rich consonant inventory (including ejectives and lateral fricatives), vowel harmony (with binary /a/), tone, numerous pluratives, meta-categorial case system, tensed demonstratives, morphologically-based realis-irrealis distinction, directional suffixes, and clause chaining.

The following short annotated text is provided to further illustrate some of the salient features of Ik grammar. Trace each number to its corresponding explanatory comment in the paragraph that follows.

(9)   Oŋor ńda Tulú ('The Elephant and the Hare')

> *Noo sayo kainikee nuu iluɲuƙotat,*
> noo[1]   say-o[2]   kaɪn-íké-é[3] = nuu[4]   ilúɲ-úƙot[5]-át-[a6],
> CONJ.PST3   some-INS   year-PL-GEN = REL.PL.PST3 pass-COMP-3PL-REAL
> In some years gone by,

> *iya noo Tulua nda Oŋor.*
> i-a[7] = noo[8]   tulú-a[9]   ńda   oŋor[10]
> be-REAL = PST3   hare-NOM   and   elephant[OBL]
> there was a Hare and an Elephant.

1 Tensed relative pronouns like *noo* (remote past) have been grammaticalized into use as conjunctions introducing temporal subordinate clauses. 2 The instrumental case marker {-ɔ} is found on noun phrases expressing time concepts. 3 This noun phrase in the genitive case modifies the preceding noun *sayo*. 4 Relative pronouns are enclitics that convey both the number of their heads (in this case plural) and the tense of the relative clause (in this case remote past). 5 The directional suffixes, like the andative {-ʊƙɔtí-}, are also used aspectually, here as completive. 6 Because there is a brief pause between the subordinate and main clauses, the final morpheme, here the realis suffix {-a}, is devoiced. 7 The verb comes first in unmarked main clauses. 8 Tense enclitics come between the verb and the following

subject(s). 9 The nominative case suffix {-a} marks the subject (A/S) of indicative main clauses. 10 Oblique (peripheral) arguments, like those following the coordinating conjunction *ńda*, are marked with the oblique case in Ik, which is zero morpheme.

The text continues below with more annotated features:

(10)　*Mitiya noo koto Oŋora nda Tulu ebaik,*

mit-i[11]-a＝noo＝kótó[12]　　oŋor-a　　　ńda tulú　　　éba-ik[o13]
be-PLUR-NOM＝PST3＝ADV elephant-NOM and hare[OBL] friend-PL[OBL]
The Elephant and the Hare were friends,

　　　minimosatie d̲ita liaatikoe.

mín-ímɔ́s[14]-áti[15]-e[16]　d̲ítá　　　liaát-íkó-[e]
love-RECIP-3PL-SIML　　 like　　　brother-PL-GEN
loving each other like brothers.

11 The pluractional suffix {-í-} encodes grammatical number in the verbal system. In this case, it conveys the habitual nature of the animals' friendship. Being dominantly [＋ATR], it has also harmonized the preceding [-ATR] root *mɪt-* 'be'. 12 The adverbial (＝)*kɔtɔ* is an important clause connector and is one of the few indicators of contrastiveness or counter-expectation (though here that meaning is not in focus). 13 The oblique case zero-morpheme often allows the underlying form of morphemes to surface, here the plurative {-íkó-}. 14 The reciprocal suffix requires high tones on the preceding root, regardless of its underlying tone melody. Functionally, it detransitivizes a transitive clause by conflating the A and O into S. 15 The 3PL subject-agreement suffix {-áti-} is one of the language's opaque [＋ATR]-dominant morphemes that block leftward harmony to the stem. 16 The simultaneous aspect marker {-kɛ} is used to mark chained clauses like this one that express circumstances attending the main clause.

A final excerpt from this story brings out a few more grammatical features:

(11) *Na konto odowi, toɗoyoo didia watik,*

na[16]=kón-ít[17]-ó   ódou-i[18] toɗó-y-óo[19]   didi-a   watí-k^{a}[20]

CONJ=one-SING-INS   day-GEN begin-3SG-SEQ weather-NOM raining-ACC

One day, it started raining,

itsyaketʉo ɉa roɓa ni tokobak.

itsyák[21]-ét[22]-u[23]-o=ɉa   roɓ-a=ni[24]   tɔkɔba-k^{a}

begin-INCH-3SG-SEQ=ADV   people-NOM=DEM.PL   cultivating-ACC

and these people (the Elephant and Hare) started cultivating.

16 The proclitic conjunction *na=* introduces temporal clauses within a sequential clause chain. Such temporal clauses are tensed relative to the preceding and following sequential clauses; they do not express absolute tense. 17 The singulative *-ɪt/it* is no longer productive and can only be found in lexemes and lexicalized expressions like *kónító* 'on one…'. 18 The genitive case marker {-ɛ} is raised to /ɪ,i/ after high back vowels. 19 When the 3SG suffix {-ɪ-} is desyllabified into a glide, the following vowel, in this case the sequential aspect marker {-(k)ɔ}, is lengthened compensatorily. The sequential aspect suffix marks chained sequential clauses that depend on an initial controlling clause for TAM specification. 20 If the subject of a transitive verb is 3-person, any objects will be in the accusative case. 21 Younger speakers increasingly use Teso-Turkana borrowings, here the verb *itsyák-* in place of the Ik *ɪsá-* 'begin'. 22 The venitive directional suffix {-ɛt-} is also used aspectually to convey inchoativeness. 23 A high front vowel, like this 3SG {-i-}, is backed to /u/ when followed by /ɔ,o/. 24 Ik demonstratives indicate number as well as tense.

1.2.3 Lectal variation and language contact

Lectal variation is minimal among Ik speakers. This is due to the combined factors of the Ik's small numbers, proximity, mobility, and ethnic solidarity. No lectal varieties that could be described as dialects are known to exist. What little variation does occur is mainly in phonology, tonology, and lexis.

For example, speakers from *Loúsúna*, a village on the edge of a gorge between *Tímu* and *Kámion*, tend to reduce the affricates /ts/ and /ts'/ to [s] and [s']. Thus the common greeting *Atsída awóo?* 'Have you come from home?', rendered as *Asída awóo?,* quickly identifies speakers from *Loúsúna*. On the side of lexis, speakers from certain areas, like *Kámion* for example, tend to use more Teso-Turkana loanwords than speakers from other areas. The general consensus among the Ik is that the Ik spoken around *Tímu* Forest in the south is 'pure' Ik, i.e. less influenced by Teso-Turkana.

A second type of lectal variation involves sound shifts between speakers of different generations. These demographically defined lects, or 'chronolects', were first described by Heine (1983, 1999). As described by Heine, these chronolects differ in their inventory of contrastive consonants, leading to splits and mergers of several sounds. The most easily recognizable difference between chronolects is the loss of lateral fricatives in younger generations. But chronolects also differ in tonology. Younger speakers tend to employ high-tone insertion more than their parents' generation (see §3.2.4).

Various linguistic traits suggest that Ik used to be in contact with Cushitic (Lamberti 1988) and Southern Nilotic (Rottland 1983) languages, whereas nowadays its contact is with English, Swahili, and the Teso-Turkana (including Dodoth, Jie, Toposa, and Turkana). Beyond areal contact through trade and travel, the cultural dominance exerted by the Teso-Turkana peoples has strongly influenced the Ik language. As many Ik children enter their teen-age years, they begin learning a Teso-Turkana language during trips outside Ikland, stints at non-Ik schools, or periods when a non-Ik guest stays at their home. Thus many Ik adults have a functional command of one or more Teso-Turkana languages, though few become very fluent.

Contact with Swahili comes about in three ways. First, over the years many Ik have lived in Kenya, having gone there for school, work, or to escape some catastrophe in their homeland. Typically, the longer they remain in Kenya, the more fluent they become in Swahili. Second, since one of the

languages of the Ugandan army is Swahili, the presence of soldiers patrolling Ikland leads to contact with Swahili. Third, a few Swahili songs are sung in churches. As a result of these three inroads, Swahili functions as a useful but limited language of wider communication among the Ik.

English touches the Ik by being the national language of Uganda, the language of national media and education, of inter-ethnic business, of religious materials, and of general cultural aspiration toward the West. Ik people who have completed on average five–seven years of primary education manage to get by in English. Fluency of course increases the longer they stay in school. Some Ik, especially men—as women have had much fewer educational opportunities—become reasonably adept at English with little to no formal education. For most Ik, learning these contact languages has been more out of survival necessity than leisure or pleasure.

1.2.4 Vitality

In contrast to the other, endangered Kuliak (Rub) languages, Ik language is still vital. According to the EGIDS scale (Simons & Lewis 2010), Ik is a level 6 'vigorous', since "the language is used by all generations and the situation is sustainable." Small children are still learning it as their mother tongue and typically remain monolingual for at least six years. After that, they may begin to pick up English or Teso-Turkana from school and/or travels outside Ikland. Ik young people face a subtle pressure to learn Teso-Turkana as a language of wider communication. It is especially useful in trade, travel, and simple physical survival. A fair number of Ik children attend primary schools in towns and thus have to learn one of these languages in order to learn from the teachers. But adding Teso-Turkana, English, or Swahili (in Kenyan schools) to the repertoire of Ik youth has not so far diminished the vitality of Ik in the homeland. There, Ik is still spoken in all domains of life, with the exception of local community schools (if teachers are non-Ik) and in Christian churches (with non-Ik songs or visiting non-Ik preachers).

But perhaps the more important indicator of Ik's vitality is the positive attitude the Ik have toward their language. It is a symbol of their ethnic identity and solidarity. They revel in their ability to communicate in a language that no outsider, including their long-time Teso-Turkana enemies, can understand in the least. It is a rightful means of surviving and subverting the oppression they have so often experienced.

Recognizing their language as a unifying cultural asset, the Ik today are eager to see their language taught (alongside English) in schools and used in churches, since those are the two domains which present the greatest threat. The Ik do also take great pride in being able to speak other languages, but this is not in opposition to speaking their mother tongue. Teso-Turkana languages and cultures have had massive influence on Ik language and culture, but the Ik have managed to absorb the impact. This they did by accommodating foreign influences to the point needed for physical survival but resisting at the point needed for ethnic and linguistic survival. With increased language development efforts, the Ik language should remain strong and vital at least well into the present century.

1.2.5 Previous works

It goes without saying that this grammar of Ik builds on the good linguistic work of many others. The first of these others, Wayland (1931), compiled a short list of Ik words on a geological survey through the area. In his article, he refers to the Ik as the 'Wanderobo', a common term for non-pastoralist peoples bordering the lands of Eastern Nilotes. Because his word list includes several items not immediately recognizable as Ik, it fostered a belief that persisted for years that 'Dorobo' might be a fourth, now extinct Kuliak language. Careful scrutiny, however, reveals that Wayland's 'Dorobo' wordlist is most likely Ik, poorly transcribed and poorly glossed (Schrock, to appear; also Serzisko 1992:7)). The implication is that there never was a fourth Kuliak language called 'Dorobo', though credit is still due Wayland for recording the first information on the language.

As the years progressed, other linguists undertook to describe Ik. This led to several early grammar sketches, each with different emphases, including Crazzolara 1967, Heine 1971, Tucker 1971-73, and Heine 1975. Once Ik became known to the linguistic world, the question of Kuliak internal and external classification arose. This question was first addressed by Greenberg 1963, then Heine 1976, and in the same year Bender 1976, followed later by contributions from Ehret 1981, Fleming 1983, and Lamberti 1988.

The first attempt at a full grammar of Ik was Heine 1983, which unfortunately was never published. From there, the mantle of Ik grammar study was taken up by Fritz Serzisko, a colleague of Heine's at Cologne. Serzisko published a series of books and articles on Ik and on various linguistic topics with Ik as the main source of data (Serzisko 1985, 1985-87, 1987, 1988, 1989a-b, 1992, and 1993a-b). Heine 1990 also appears, a study of the dative case in Ik and Kanuri. Later in the decade comes Heine & König 1996, an unpublished revision and expansion of Heine 1983.

In the 1980s and '90s, formerly SIL linguist Richard Hoffman began working on the language. Although he never published on it, he gained a thorough knowledge of Ik grammar and began working out a practical orthography. Also in the 1990s, Heine returned to Ik and published the first Ik-English dictionary (1999) that included an ethnographic sketch, phonology sketch, and an ethnobotanical section. The new millennium began with König's lengthy exposition of Ik case (2002) and SIL's sociolinguistic survey of the Ik area (2007). König 2008 refined her 2002 analysis of Ik case and fit it into a broader and much-needed discussion of case across Africa.

Since 2008, I have been personally conducting linguistic research on Ik, under the auspices of SIL Uganda. This research has led to a number of papers, including a foray into nominal tone (2011a), a phonological sketch (2011b), and a description of the Ik instrumental case (Schrock 2014).

1.3   Research background

Seen in light of what has already been written on Ik, the need for a fuller grammatical description arose from the practical challenges of language development, as well as from a desire to contribute to linguistic science. On the side of language development, creating a practical orthography has required a growing knowledge of phonology and morphology, just as the creation and translation of literature will require knowledge of lexis, syntax, and discourse. Attempts to develop the language practically under SIL kept bumping up against newly discovered allophones and unidentified morphemes. At last it seemed good to consolidate previous research and add new findings into one comprehensive treatment. Doing so fulfils the second desire—adding to linguistic science—by documenting the last vital member of the dwindling Kuliak (Rub) subgroup and describing its unique features.

1.3.1 Methodology

The aim reflected in this book has been to research and analyze Ik grammar in terms of Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) expounded in Dixon (2010-2012). BLT is a theory of linguistics as a natural science that "consists in the study and comparison of the grammatical patterns of individual languages" (Dixon 2010a:5). This approach makes eclectic use of the classical grammatical tradition and the growing body of generally accepted linguistic terms, concepts, and categories. The hope of using this methodology is that the unique genius of the Ik language might be brought to the fore without being overly constrained by any particular formal theory. Insofar as this hope is realized in the following pages, people from different theoretical backgrounds should be able to easily follow it. Given the diverse theoretical orientations of prior linguists who have worked on Ik, this seemed to be the best way to capture the language in a grammatical description.

Also, this grammar is primarily a form-based, analytical grammar. It is form-based in that it seeks to exhaustively list and describe all the grammatical forms of Ik: phonemes, morphemes, syntagmemes, and

lexemes. As much as possible, the functions of the forms are discussed as well. By the same token, the grammar is analytical in that it breaks apart the language bit by bit. In this sense it is designed to assist one in the more passive skill of interpreting or decoding the Ik language. The more advanced and culturally relevant skill of using or encoding the language appropriately will have to await a work building on a much greater knowledge of the language's semantics, pragmatics, cultural matrix…and people.

In describing the forms found in Ik, an eye has been kept toward diachronic origin and explanation. The need for this element of my approach is captured eloquently in the following quote: "Because grammar is always emergent but never present it could be said that it never exists as such, but is always coming into being. There is, in other words, no 'grammar' but only 'grammaticization'—movements toward structure which are often characterizable in typical ways." (Hopper 1987:148, cited in Serzisko 1992).

Diachronic exploration requires comparison with other languages in the area. To this end, I have tried—as time and opportunity allowed—to seek parallels for Ik forms in the non-Bantu languages of East Africa. Due to limited library access, this comparison focused primarily on Dhaasanac (Tosco 2001), So (Carlin 1993), and Turkana (Dimmendaal 1983).

1.3.2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this grammar was carried out intermittently from March 2008 until July 2014. From 2008-2009, my wife and I lived in a Baptist mission compound surrounded by Dodoth (Karimojong) people. Collecting Ik data was limited to occasional visits by four educated Ik men: †Lochiyo Gabriel, Lokwang Hillary, †Lopuwa Paul, and later Longoli Philip. From time to time, day-trips were made to the Ik area. In Kaabong, I focused on Ik phonology, collecting the 1700-word Comparative African Wordlist as well as SADUL grammatical questionnaires (Bouquiaux & Thomas 1992).

In late 2009, we finally were able to move to Ikland, to a compound with an Ik village less than 100 meters away. Although still living in a private compound, our contact with Ik speakers increased significantly. During the first two months, SIL lexicographer Ron Moe and I conducted a lexicography workshop involving fifteen Ik men and women. Many of the words in Appendix B were collected during that workshop. And since we lived there, language learning and text collection increased from that point on.

For much of 2010, Longoli Philip became a regular language informant, working with me on various aspects of the language development program. Longoli completed Form Two of secondary school but has had opportunity for many types of training over the years, including in linguistics. He had worked previously with Bernd Heine, Fritz Serzisko, and Richard Hoffman. In late 2010, Longoli Philip and I took part in a tone workshop led by SIL tone specialist Keith Snider. Philip was the only Ik speaker in Nairobi at that time. For six weeks we elicited and analyzed tone data together.

For the next year and a half (2011-2012), Longoli Philip continued to work with me as my main teacher of Ik. American linguist Kate Shugart visited in late 2011, and along with Amber Schrock collected numerous oral histories that were later transcribed by Longoli Philip. In January 2012, two other men, Komboni Daniel and Lokwameri Sylvester, began interacting with us and providing more data through a translation training course we held.

Finally, after six months away from the Ik area, we returned to Ikland to intermittently fill in gaps in the data, revise hypotheses, and finish writing during the whole year of 2013. From the end of 2013 through the early part of 2014, Lomeri John Mark—at last returned to Ikland—provided crucial last-minute help in answering grammatical questions, checking examples, and filling in paradigms. In March-April of 2014, a group of ten Ik men participated with me in an orthography workshop. More data and insights came from our enjoyable interaction. Research then concluded in July 2014.

1.3.3 Data

The data used in this description of Ik comprises approximately 6,000 words (mostly nouns and verbs) in a FLEx lexical database and over 100 texts of different genres and varying numbers of pages. Additional data was collected throughout the fieldwork period through direct elicitation, uncountable scribbled notes, and lots of careful listening. When data is quoted from previous works, the source is indicated with the example. Otherwise, data comes from my research, usually through Longoli Philip and Lomeri John Mark or through daily interactions with Ik neighbors.

This book is the first step in making my data widely accessible. Anything I have is available upon request (betsoniik@gmail.com), with the disclaimer that in may be poorly written, transcribed, or analyzed! The Ik 1,700-word Comparative African Wordlist is available at the Comparalex website (http://comparalex.org/). And plans are being made to eventually produce a fuller Ik linguistic lexicon, a non-linguist's Ik-English dictionary, one or more volumes of annotated Ik texts, and a pedagogical grammar of Ik.

1.3.4 Orthography

Currently two orthographies exist for Ik: 1) a Linguistic Orthography (LingO) and 2) a Popular Orthography (PopO). This 'dual orthography' situation arose from the differing needs of different language practitioners and is described in detail in Schrock (In preparation). The LingO is to be used in grammars and dictionaries, while the PopO is to be used for any material produced for the general (future) Ik reading community.

The PopO uses only five vowels and does not represent tone or voiceless vowels. One consonantal difference between it and the LingO is that it represents /ʃ/ as <x>. The PopO is used in the first line (in *italics*) in all the example sentences and texts in this grammar. An adapted LingO is used in the second line of examples and texts. It represents all thirty consonants and nine vowels, as well as assimilated nasals, tone and voiceless vowels.