Language as category

Using prototype theory to create reference points for the study of multilingual data

CONFLICTING OBSERVATIONS	
fluid and creative language use	conservative ideologies
intense mixing and switching	functional mixing and switching
large repertoires	identifiable languages
variation	consensus

PROTOTYPE THEORY

PROTOTYPE THEORY

theory of categories

developed by Eleanor Rosch and colleagues

rejects binary approach based necessary and sufficient conditions

allows for a recognition of a 'prototypical' exemplars as well more marginal members of a category

allows for gradation of features defining a category, as well as the members of the category

NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS
BIRD

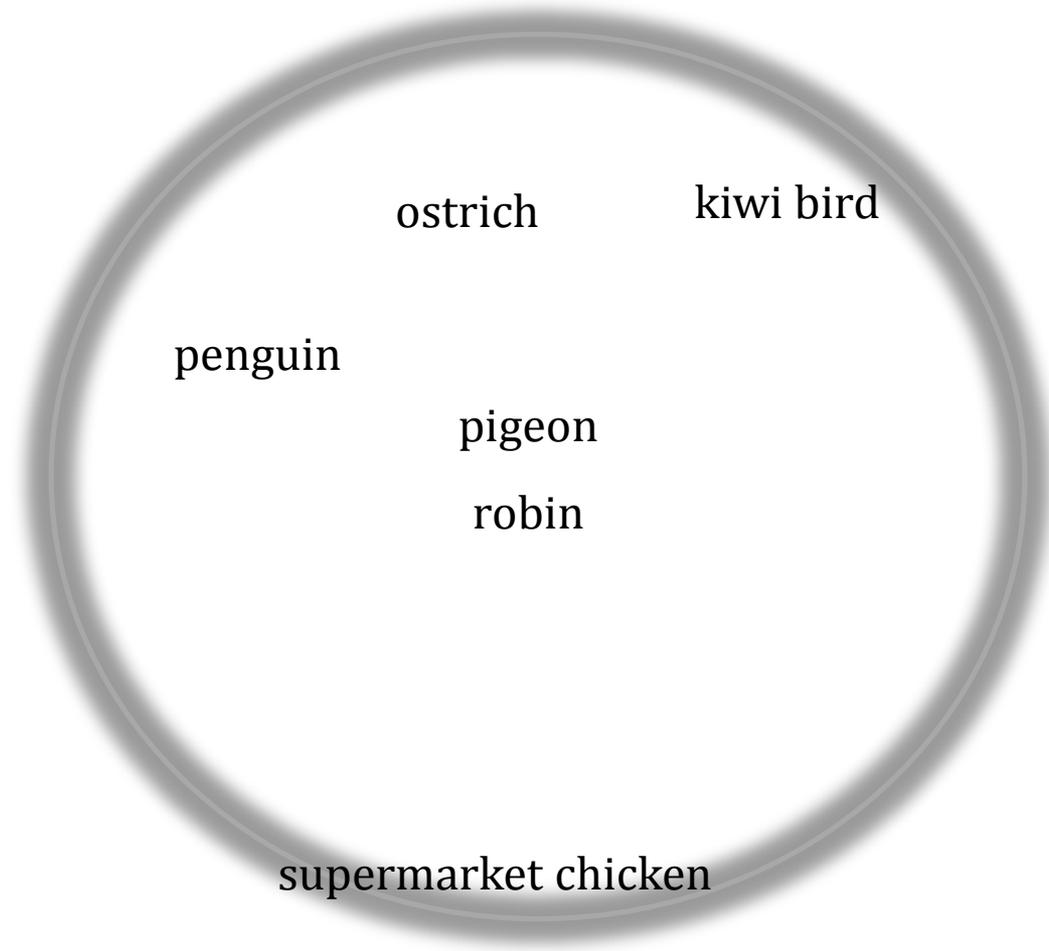| CONDITION	COUNTER EXAMPLE
flies	penguin, ostrich
has wings	kiwi bird, injured bird
has feathers	supermarket chicken
lays eggs	duck billed platypus

ALL OR NOTHING MEMBERSHIP
BIRD

book

pigeon ostrich robin
sparrow super-market chicken
penguin kiwi bird

book

spoon

duck-billed platypus

PROTOTYPE THEORY
BIRD

ostrich

kiwi bird
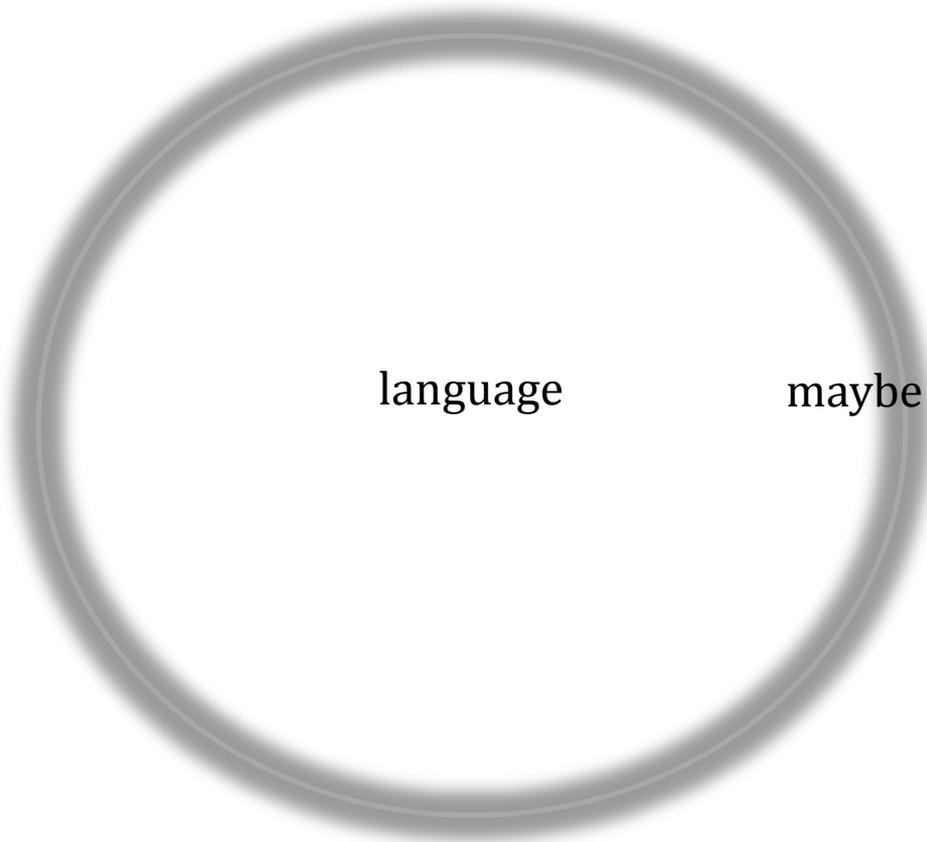
penguin

pigeon

robin

supermarket chicken

duck billed platypus

LANGUAGE AS A CATEGORY

language   maybe language?   not language

LANGUAGE AS A CATEGORY

language

established,
entrenched
consensus within
population
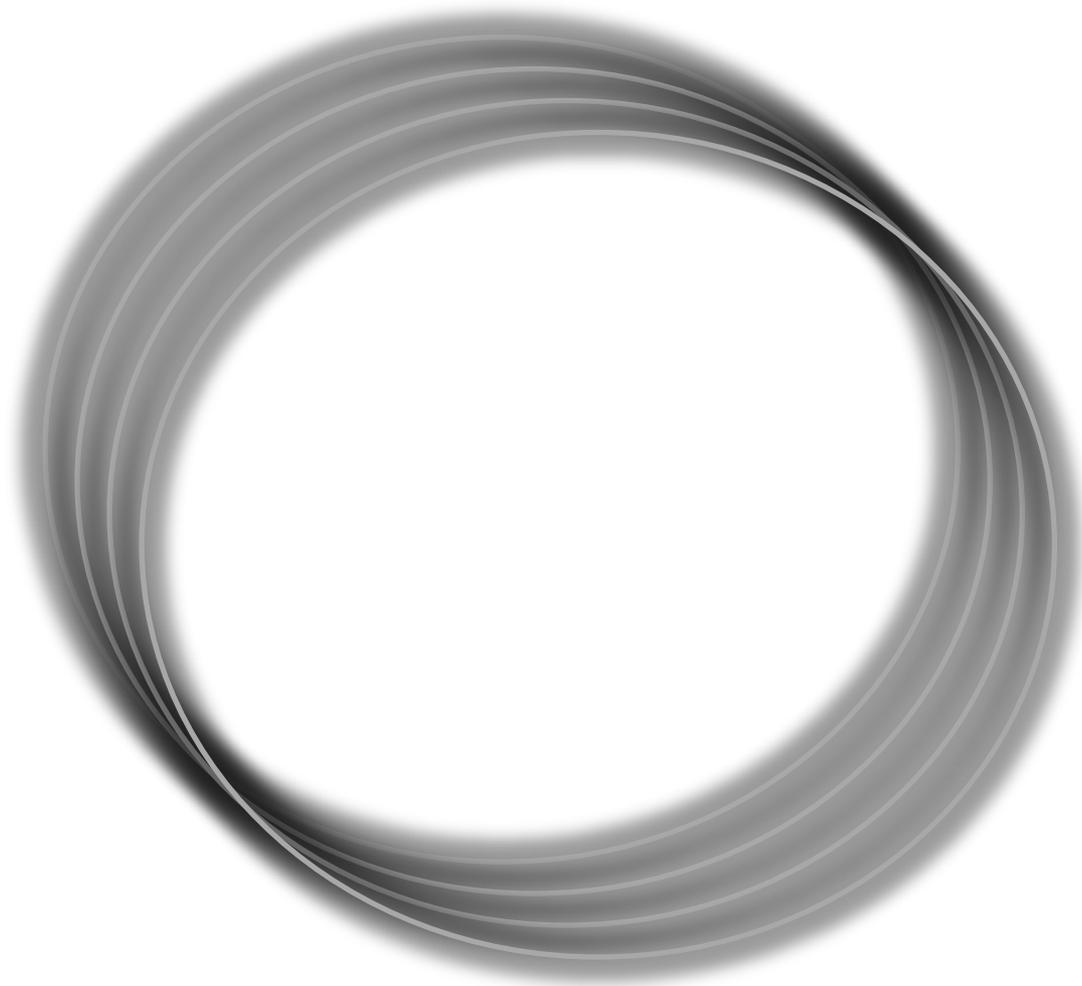
maybe language?

marginal, new,
other people use it
borrowing etc.

not language

unacceptable/unknown
to any speaker

word initial k word final h/x word initial g

LANGUAGE CATEGORIES
THE IDEOLOGY

Kujireray

Banjal

Gubëeher

Banjal

Kujireray
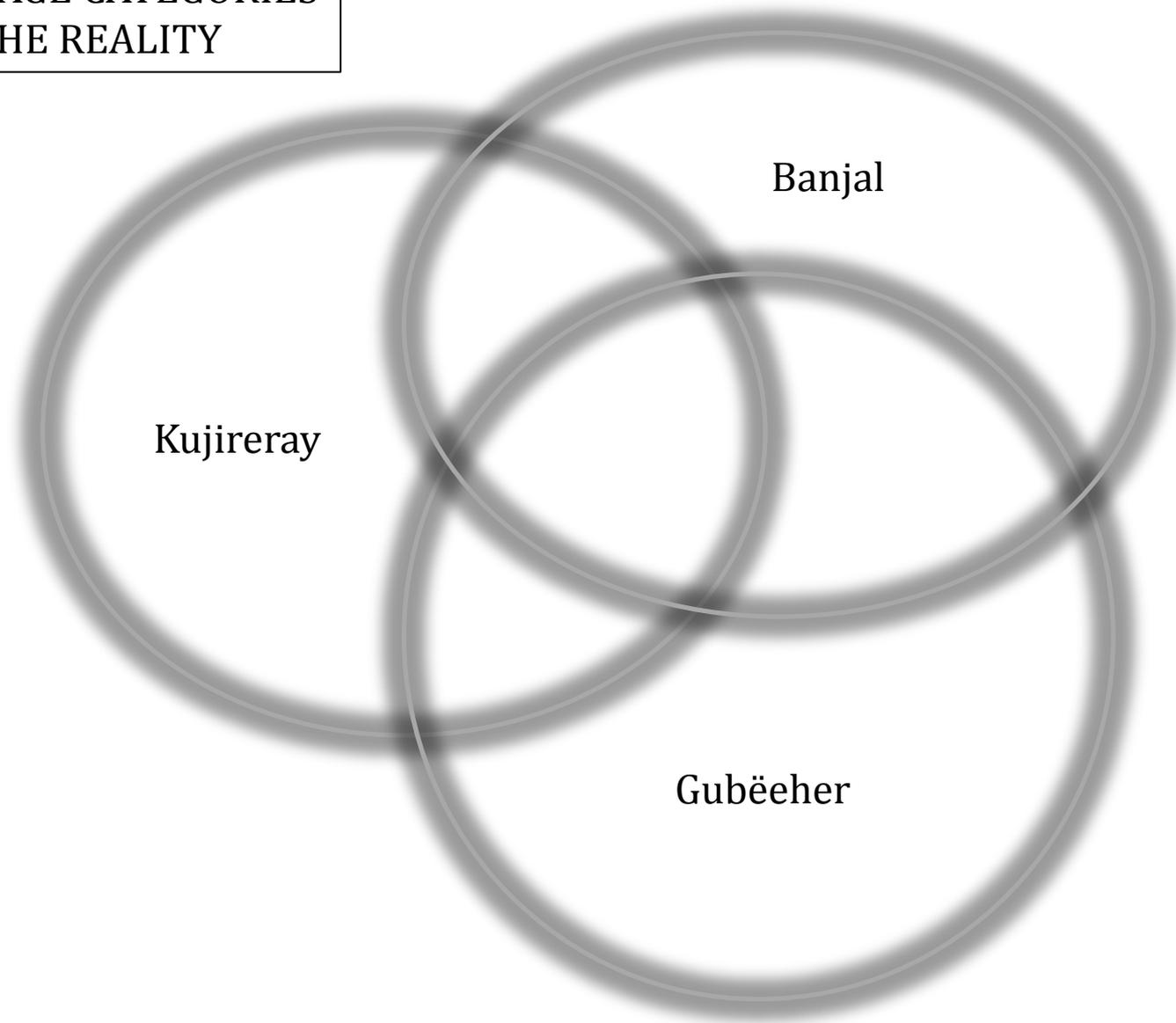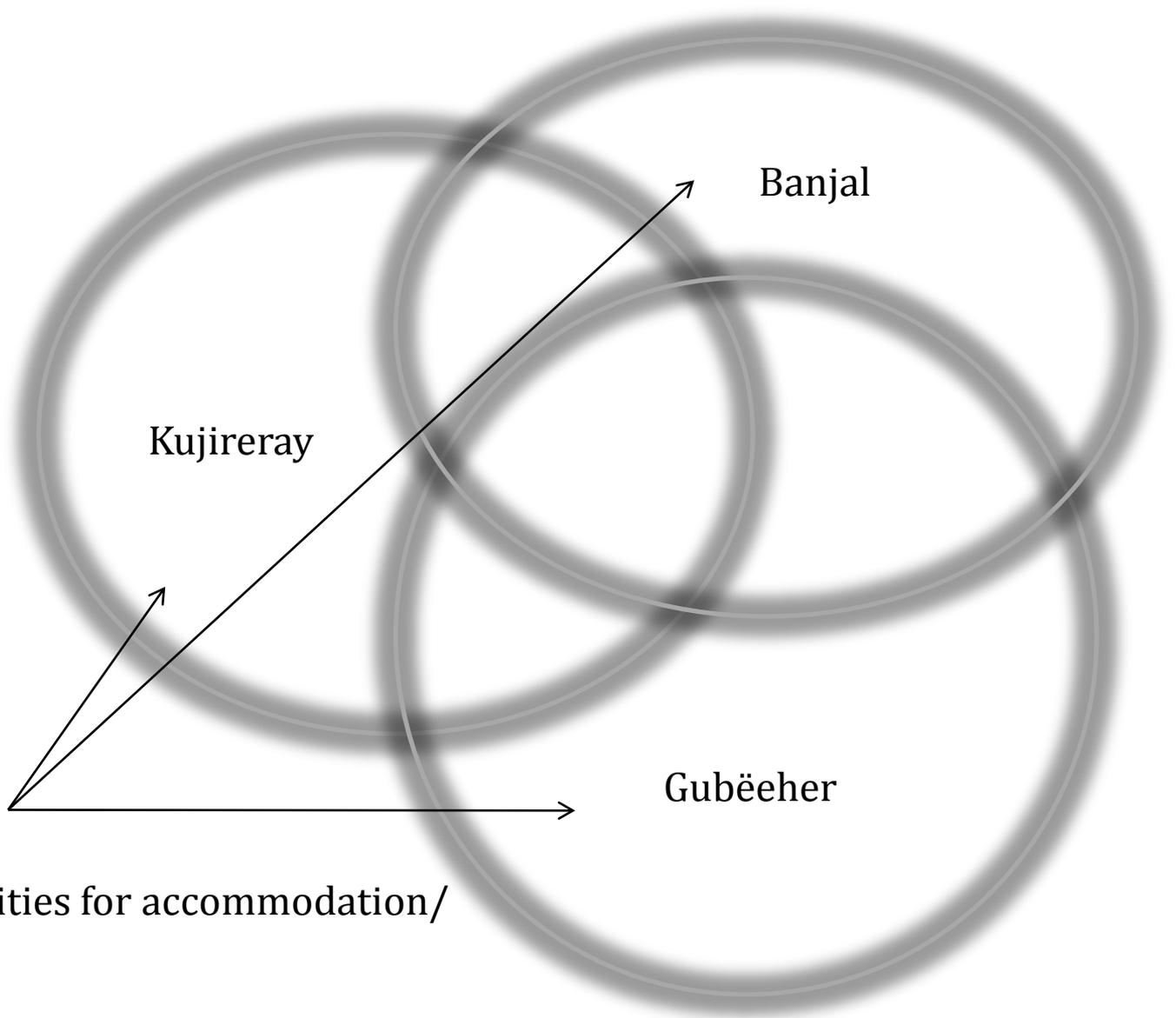
Gubëeher

Banjal

Kujireray

Gubëeher

opportunities for accommodation/
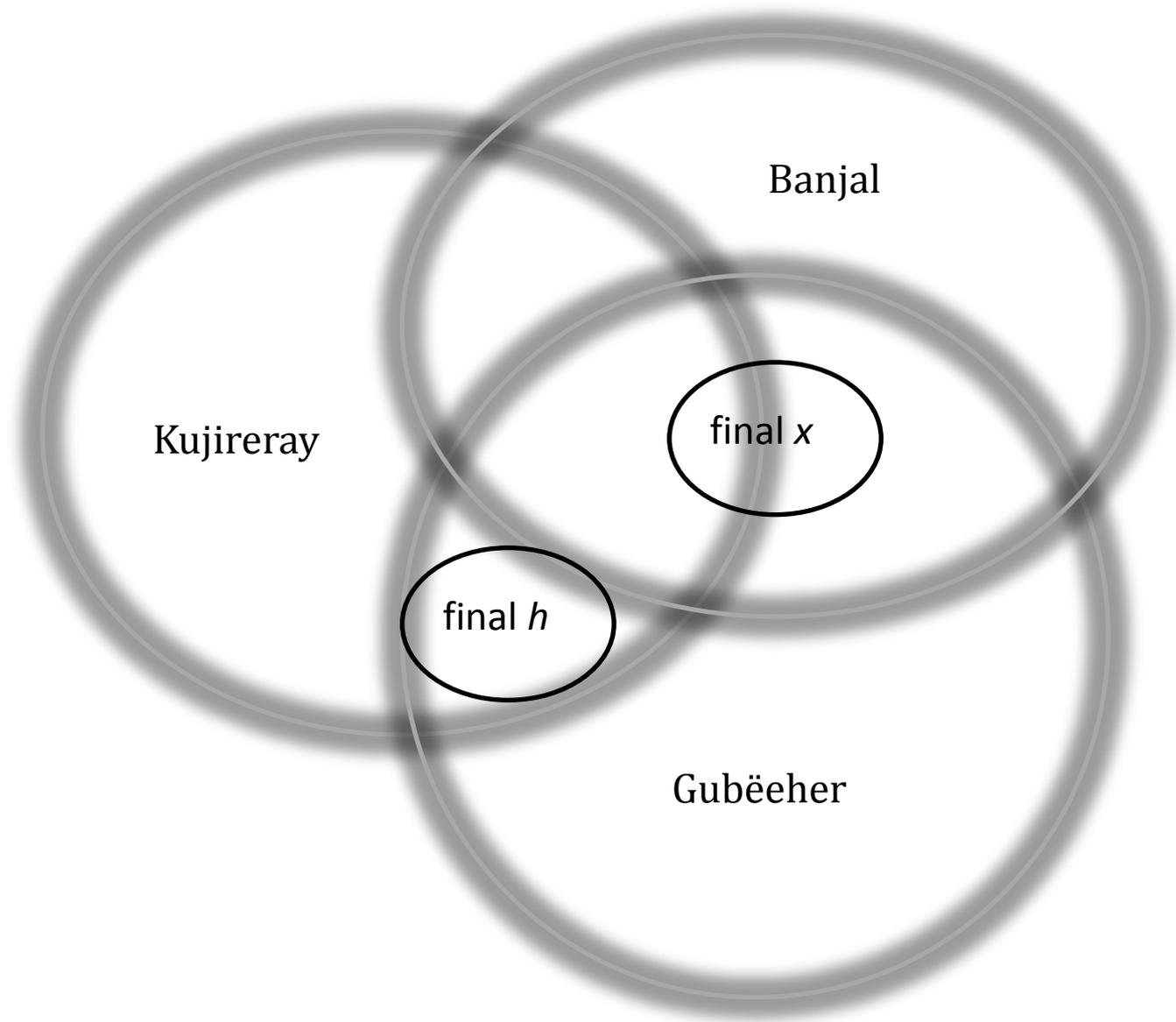variation

sites of contact/ genetic relatedness?

Banjal

Kujireray
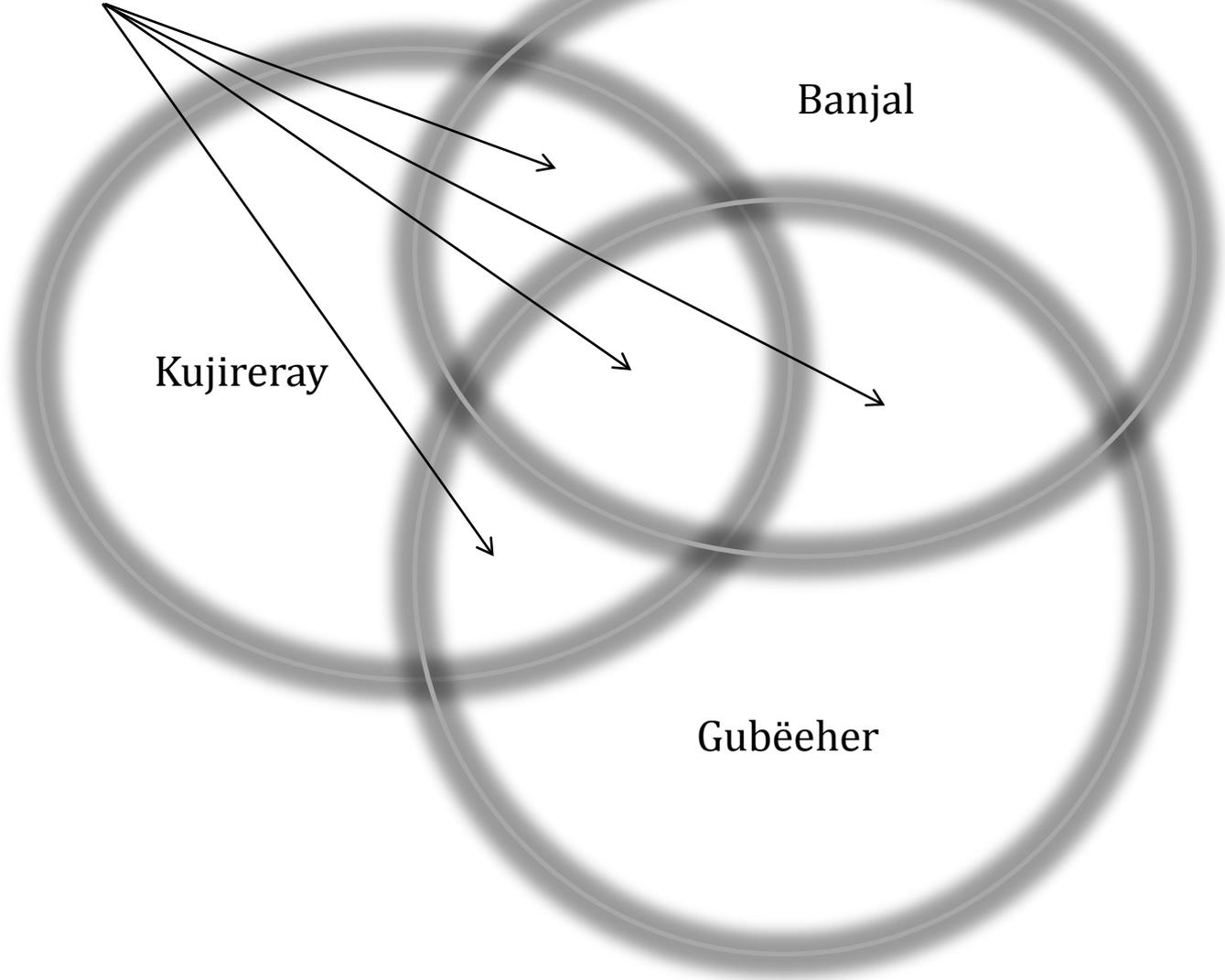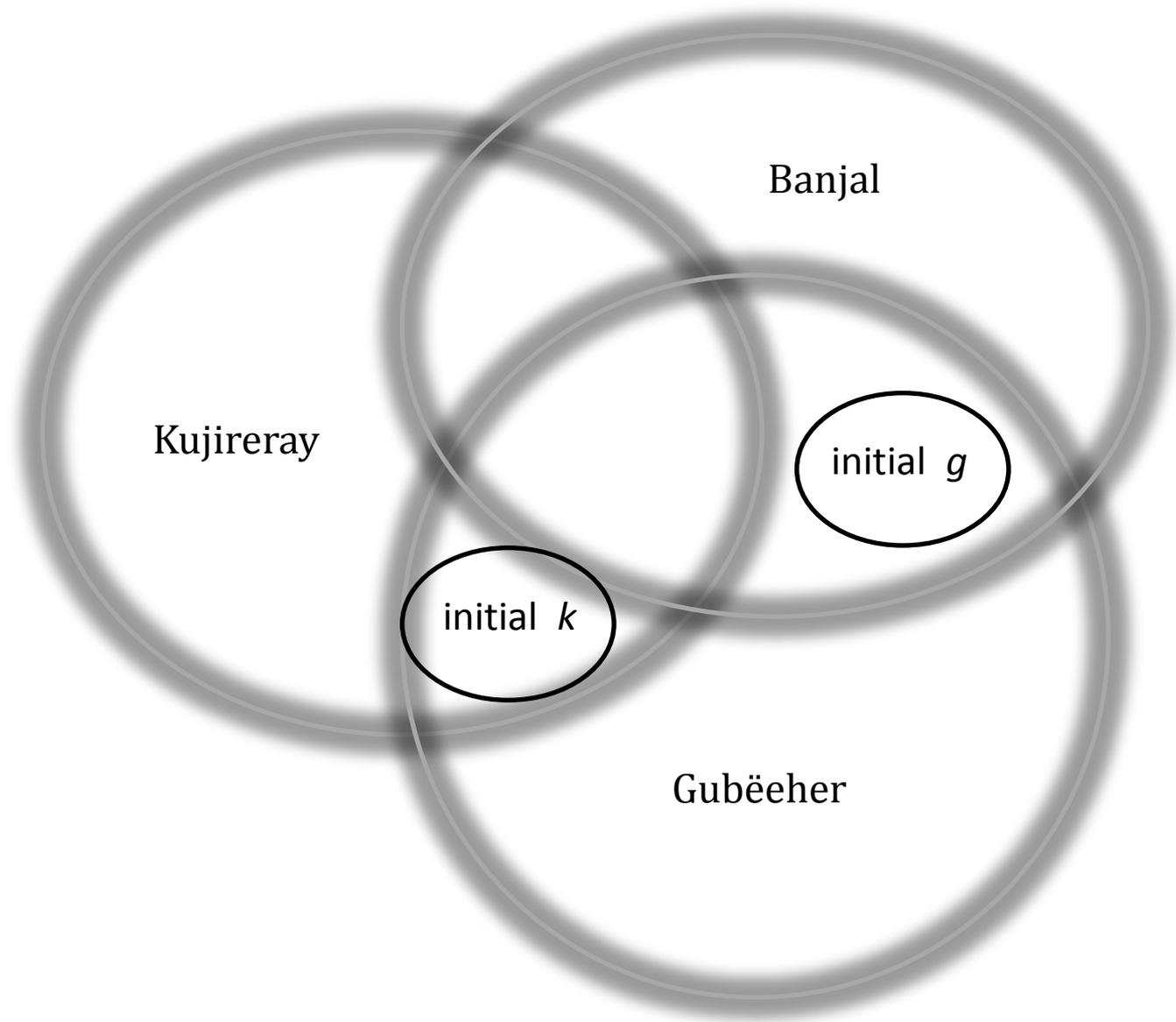
Gubëeher

Banjal

Kujireray

initial *g*

initial *k*

Gubëeher

Banjal

Kujireray

final *x*

final *h*

Gubëeher

Francais	C Gubëël	D Gubëë	E Gubëël	F Gubëël	G Gubeeher	H Gubeeher	Bainouk Gubeeher stem	J Kujire	K Kujirer	L Kujirer	M Kujirer	N Kujirer	O Kujir	P Kujir	Joola Kujirerai Stem	comment	U Eegim	V Eegin	W Eegin	X Eegima	Y Eegima	Z Eegimaa	Eegimaa Stem	lexical co	other lang info	AI Gujah	AJ Gujah	AK Gujah	AL NC 1c	AM Gujah	AN Gujah	Francais	Bainouk Gujaher stem	Comment Gu	Cognate List
écaille	gu	ha	ja				er	ka	u						er		ga						yew	*											N
?								fu	ku						fud	meaning difference																			
'rice storage	bi	i					jeej																												
à							a								ni																	à	a		N
abaisser la tete (lower head)												e			silen					e			cilen												
abces	bu	i					wúún	fu	ku						laf		fu						ap	none*	not fogny										
abeille	a	a -ŋ	bi				yum	ya			fa				aj		y		fa				aaj	bk											N
abre (gen.)	sin						nunuhen	bu							nunuhen		bu						nunux	bkg											
abre de mimosa								bu							mobay		bu						xëmbën												
acacia blanc																	bi						téful												
accompagner							xëërun/ŋéébin/dëëkur*					e			tinen					e			tinen												
accoucher																						ga	ppegor												
accrocher			bu				rak					e			lat					e			hot	none	not fogny, gb=gj					bu		accrocher	rak		Y
acheter					gu		jila					e			nom					e			nnom	bk											
adulte (personne)	u	in					dihel																												N
aider			bu				jahiin					e			anen					e			ramber	none	fogny -ramben										
aigle	bu	i					wuúúgúl	ka	u						bela																				N
aiguiser (sharper)			bu		ba		nix					e			ñegen					e			ñegen	bk											
aile	gu	ha					bëër	ka	u						bër		ga	u					bes	bkg*			gu	ha				aile	bënd		Y
aiselle (armpit)	gu	ha					fand										ga						súat												
aller					ha		dëëk					e			jaw					e			jow	bk											
aller chercher																						fi	ŋes												
aller tout droit												e			jaw bujooni					e			colen												
ami	u	in					díín	a	ku						pal		a	*					pal	bk											
ami	u	in-eŋ					díín	a	ku						pal		a	*					buge	none	fogny -paal										
ami	u	ñan					ñaam																												
an	/	/ -ŋ					diin					e			mit	?																an	diin		N
ancêtre	u	ñan					tuuta																												N
ancetres	u	ñañ					tuuta		si						pay			si					pay	bk											
âne	a	a -ŋ					sum	ji		mu					kilibadoh		/	si					asumm	bg	fogny - rowa										N
animal (domestique)	ba	ba -ŋ					saam								/	generic term?	é	sí					núhureŋ												N

LEXICAL CORRESPONDENCES

correspondence	number	percentage of total
Kujireray-Banjal	248	52.32
Kujireray-Gubeeher	51	10.76
Gubeeher-Banjal	12	2.53
Kujireray-Banjal-Gubeeher	94	19.83
none	69	14.56
total	474	100