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- A. Western = TU-KAN (= Bodelean according to Ehret (1993: 105))
 - a) KAN: Kanuri, Kanemo
 - b) TU: Tubu, Tuda = Teda-Daza
- B. Eastern = BER (= Enderlean according to Ehret (1993: 105))
 - a) BER: Zaghawa, Bidayat
 - b) SAGA: Sagato-a = Berti

It is almost generally accepted that the Saharan language family belongs to the vast Nilo-Saharan macro-phylogen.

Greenberg (1963: 130) offered the following high-level classification of Nilo-Saharan languages:

A. Songhai, B. Saharan, C. Maban, D. Fur, E. Koman & Gumuz, F. Chigi-Tw (consisting of Berti, Kanama, Central Sudanic, Eastern Sudanic).

Ehret (1992: 15-3v) places the Saharan family among "isolated outliers" together with Songhai, Kanama and Kuliak, against the "peripheral satellites" (Maban, Fur and Central Sudanic) and the "core group" (Berti, Nubian, Kari, Dinka, Tama, Sarma, Jebel, Tornein, Daga, Nilotic, Koman, Gumuz, Krongo-Kadugli).

Ehret (1993: 104-106) divides Nilo-Saharan into Koman (incl. Gumuz) and Sudanic, consisting of Central and Northern Sudanic. The latter super-branch is divided into Khazax and Saharo-Sahelian. The term Sahelian is used for Dinka, Fur, Maban and Eastern Sudanic.

On the other hand, Petráček (1988: 133) admits only areal connections among Songhai, Maban and Saharan languages and rejects the Nilo-Saharan hypothesis of the genetic plan.