A sociolinguistic survey of the Mbelime language area

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References
Abstract

This paper presents a sociolinguistic survey conducted in the Mbelime language communities (Gur language family) of Benin’s Atacora département.

The goal of the survey was to investigate the Mbelime sociolinguistic situation in terms of regional variations of Mbelime, language attitudes, language development, and use of Mbelime in the church domain. Interviews with community members and collection of wordlists were the survey methods employed.

It was found that community opinions varied on where “pure” Mbelime is spoken; that is, Mbelime which is not mixed with neighboring languages, in the assimilation of pronunciation, tones, lexical items, or phrase structures from those languages. The opinions varied depending on the location of the interviewee. However, there was some overlap in these opinions, particularly in reference to the central area of Mbelime-speaking villages. There is a keen interest in Mbelime literacy. In the church domain Mbelime is already used widely.

1. Introduction

This paper reports on a sociolinguistic survey conducted in the Mbelime speech communities of Benin. The Mbelime speech variety belongs to the Gur language family and is situated in northern Benin in the Atacora département (Naden 1989). The purpose of this survey was to investigate the Mbelime sociolinguistic situation, especially regarding regional variations of Mbelime, language attitudes, language development and use of Mbelime in the church domain. The survey methods used were interviews with Mbelime community members and the collection of wordlists.

The survey was conducted in May 1998 by Deborah H. Hatfield, Michael McHenry, Dieke Rietkerk, Daniel Bättig, and Trudi Hunt, all researchers of SIL Togo-Benin.

In Section 2, pertinent background information on the Mbelime speech variety is presented. Some of these data were gathered during the field interviews with members of the Mbelime language community. This section is followed by a presentation of the research questions (Section 3) and a description of the methodology as applied during this survey (Section 4). In Section 5, the findings are discussed, followed by a summary and conclusions (Section 6). The report closes with a set of appendices and a list of references.

2. Background

2.1. Language classification

Williamson (1989) and Naden (1989) give the following classification for Mbelime [ISO code: mql]:

- Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, North Volta-Congo, Gur, Central Gur – Northern, Oti-Volta, Eastern, DiTammar {“Niente”}

“Niente” is another name for Mbelime. “Niente”, listed between brackets (in Naden 1989:144), signifies that it is a “linguistically significant dialect” of Ditamari. This report, however, focuses on
the Mbelime speech community itself and hence does not investigate Mbelime as a dialect of Ditamari.

CENALA (1990) uses the orthography “Mbèlime” in the “Carte linguistique.” The Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin lists the language as “mbelime (mbelime).” The Ethnologue (Grimes 1996) uses “Mbelime” for the orthography. The “Sous-Commission Linguistique du mbèlime” (Mbelime Language Committee) uses “mbèlime” for the language name.

Interviewed community members reported that “bebeibe” is the name that they use for the people, and “ubide” for one person.

2.2. Language area

The Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin (CNL du Bénin 1983) reports that Mbelime is spoken in the Atacora département throughout the Cobly sous-préfecture, except in the following villages: Nouangou, Bagapodi (Cobly r.c.), Namatienou (Datori r.c.), and Sienou and Pintinga (Tapoga r.c.).

The Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin (CNL du Bénin 1983) also reports that it is spoken in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture in the villages of Dipoli and Dikounmini (Dipoli r.c.), and in the villages of Koutchatié and Tassayota (Korontiéré r.c.). (See Appendix A.1 for a map of the area.)

3. Research questions

The purpose of this survey was to investigate the Mbelime sociolinguistic situation. More specifically the following topics were explored: regional variations of Mbelime, language attitudes, language development, and use of Mbelime in the church domain. The main research questions can be listed as follows:

1. Mbelime varieties
   - Are there regional varieties (dialects) of Mbelime? That is, is there variation between the manner in which Mbelime is spoken in one region versus another?

2. Dialect intercomprehension
   - If there are regional varieties of Mbelime, are there any reported comprehension difficulties between speakers of these varieties?

3. Language attitudes
   - If there are Mbelime varieties (dialects), is there one which is viewed as pure Mbelime in the Mbelime speech community?

1 [Editor: See also the current version of the Ethnologue (Lewis 2009) for an updated entry on Mbelime.]
2 At the time of the survey Benin was divided into six governmental provinces called “départements,” each containing a varying number of “sous-préfectures” (s.-p.) composed of rural communes (r.c.) and urban circumscriptions. All town names are spelled according to the sous-préfecture map of the 1992 Benin census data (Ministère du Plan 1994) and/or the Atlas monographique des Communes du Bénin (MISD 2001). During the course of the survey interviews a number of names from the Cobly sous-préfecture map (Ministère du Plan 1994) were mentioned and corrected by the informants. These names are listed in Appendix C.
4. Language development
   - What written development has there been for Mbelime? What documents, if any, are available in written Mbelime?

5. Language use in the church domain
   - Which languages are used in the church domain, and in which contexts?

4. Methodology

4.1. Assessment techniques

In order to address the research questions mentioned above, the following research tools were used:

1. Preliminary interviews to gather pertinent background information
2. Community questionnaires to explore the following topics: regional variations of Mbelime, language attitudes, language development, and use of Mbelime in the church domain
3. Wordlists to investigate regional variation in lexical items and phonological features

4.2. Implementation

4.2.1. Interviews

Before the survey was commenced, preliminary interviews were held to gather pertinent background information from the following sources:

   - The “Sous-Commission Linguistique du mbelime” (Mbelime Language Committee) in Cobly
   - The sous-préfet in Cobly, a first language (L1) speaker of Mbelime
   - R. Sambieni (1998, personal communication, May, Cobly), an L1 Mbelime speaker involved in linguistic analysis of Mbelime; he also who served the researchers as an interpreter
   - A Mbelime literacy teacher

4.2.2. Community questionnaires

For the administration of community questionnaires, an attempt was made to choose Mbelime villages which were assumed to give an overview of the whole language area. During informal interviews held with the chief of each village in order to make arrangements for the official community interviews, it was confirmed that these villages were Mbelime-speaking. The following locations were chosen for the administration of the community questionnaire:

   - Namoutchaga (in the Cobly sous-préfecture, approximately 7 km south-west of Cobly) – located in the center of the Mbelime-speaking area
   - Tassayota (in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture) – located in the south of the Mbelime-speaking area
The respondents for the community questionnaires consisted of the chief of the village, his counselors and/or elders, as well as a cross-section of the community including the following “social groups:”

- Men of about 40 years of age (“older men”)
- Women of about 40 years of age (“older women”)
- Men of about 20 years of age (“younger men”)
- Women of about 20 years of age (“younger women”)

In Namoutchaga a cross-section of the population was represented, but in Tassayota there were very few women in attendance.

During the survey, the researchers were accompanied by an L1 Mbelime speaker who served the researchers as an interpreter. During the village community questionnaires, he translated all questions into Mbelime and also translated any Mbelime responses into French. The interpreter was instructed to tell the researchers exactly what was being said by the community members. (See Appendix B for an example of the questionnaire.)

4.2.3. Wordlists

Wordlists were elicited in the villages of Namoutchaga and Tassayota for the purpose of investigating regional variation in lexical items and phonological features. A few grammatical features were also elicited. The analysis of these data will not be included in this report.

5. Results

In the following sections, data gathered from community questionnaires and preliminary interviews will be presented according to the following topics: Mbelime language area (Section 5.1), regional variations of Mbelime (Section 5.2), dialect intercomprehension (Section 5.3), ethnic identity (Section 5.4), language development (Section 5.5), literacy situation (Section 5.6), and language use in the church domain (Section 5.7).

5.1. Mbelime language area

The researchers asked the Sous-Commission Linguistique where Mbelime speakers are to be found.

In addition to the locations mentioned in the Cobly and Boukoumbé sous-préfectures in the Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin (CNL du Bénin 1983) (see Section 2.2), the informants reported that Mbelime speakers are also found in Tanguiéta (also in the Atacora département), and in the Borgou département in Benin.

In the Borgou département, they live in the following villages: Nikki and Tchicandou (Nikki s.-p.), N’Dali (N’Dali s.-p.), and Tandou, Tchaourou, and Tchachou(Tchaourou s.-p.). They do not reside there temporarily, but have their homes there and their children attend school in those regions. However, they do return to the Atacora region for their traditional ceremonies. It was reported that Mbelime speakers are also found in Nigeria in the villages of Saki and Okoula.

The information gathered at the community interview in Tassayota confirmed that in the Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin (CNL du Bénin 1983); that is, that the four villages listed there are Mbelime-speaking, and, in fact, the whole population in those villages is comprised of Mbelime
speakers: Dikounmini, Dipoli, Koutchatié, and Tassayota (Boukoumbé s.-p.). (See Appendix A.1 and 2 for maps of the area.)

5.2. Regional variations of Mbelime

During the administration of the community questionnaires in Namoutchaga and Tassayota, and during the interview with the Sous-Commission Linguistique, informants were asked regarding regional variations of Mbelime and if there is an area where pure Mbelime is spoken. (See Appendix A.1 for a map of the area.)

5.2.1. “Pure” Mbelime

The informants from the Sous-Commission Linguistique reported that pure Mbelime is spoken in approximately 11 villages or hamlets, the northernmost being Yimpisséri and the southernmost being Koraboké. The east to west band is rather narrow. It was stated that Yimpisséri and Namoutchaga, both in this region, are villages versus the others which are actually hamlets,3 and that Yimpisséri and Namoutchaga are good locations to learn pure Mbelime. There was disagreement among those present as to whether the people in Kountori speak pure Mbelime, or whether they speak like those in Korontière, in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture, by deforming phrases. Both opinions were put forth rather strongly. Some said those in Kountori differ from pure Mbelime in their accent and in some words.

The community in Namoutchaga gave a different listing for villages where pure Mbelime is spoken, agreeing with the Sous-Commission Linguistique that Yimpisséri is the northernmost village, but they extended the area of pure Mbelime south to Houtontoinou which is very close to the border of the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture. Therefore, Kountori, and several smaller villages around it, were included. They also indicated that in those villages, young and old, male and female, all speak the same Mbelimé.

Most informants in Tassayota at first indicated that Mbelime is spoken the same throughout the region, but most acknowledged later on in the interview that there are regional differences, even though they all speak Mbelime. They explained that proper Mbelime, or “bon” (good) Mbelime, is spoken from Tassayota up to Oukouintouhoun, Oroukouaré, Tarpingou, and Kountori.

It is obvious that the perception of pure Mbelime varies with the location of the informants. In each of the locations where data were gathered, the places cited as being pure Mbelime-speaking changed. According to the Sous-Commission Linguistique and the community in Namoutchaga, Yimpisséri was seen to be the northernmost pure Mbelime village, whereas the southernmost point varied – either to Kountori (for at least some on the Sous-Commission), or to the sous-préfecture border. Those in Namoutchaga and Tassayota agreed that Kountori and the villages nearby speak pure Mbelime, but differed in their opinions as to how far north, and south, the border extended for pure Mbelime.

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3 A hamlet is like a quartier affiliated with a village. There are some compounds there, and perhaps a council member who lives there, but not a chief.
5.2.2. “Mixing” in Mbelime

In those villages where the various informants thought pure Mbelime (or proper Mbelime) was not spoken, they saw that Mbelime as being “mixed” with neighboring languages, usually Ditamari, Kunteni (a regional dialect of Nateni), Gangam, Gourmantché or Lama.

The Sous-Commission Linguistique reported that those in Tapoga (north of Cobly) mix in Gourmantché; in Datori, Koukountouga, Kapousséri, and Bahountouaré (northwest of Cobly), and in the Korontière region (south of Cobly), Gangam tones and words are mixed in; and in Oukouétergou, Ditchiaré, Touga and Hakotohouin (just north and east of Cobly), Ditamari is mixed in with words and especially in the tones.

In Namoutchaga it was reported that those in Chantiénou (near the border with the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture) mix “Korontière” (in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture) in their Mbelime (presumably this means the variety of Mbelime that is spoken in the Korontière region). Specifically they mentioned the tones, indicating that the speakers in Chantiénou lower and raise the tones.

Those in Tassayota claimed that the Mbelime in Cobly is “le mbelime de kunteni” (the Mbelime of Kunteni, a dialect of Nateni), and that also in Namoutchaga, Nanagadé and Sini (north of Tassayota), Kunteni is mixed in, and the tones used are like Kunteni. They also had the opinion that in Chantiénou (just north of Tassayota) the people mix Ditamari into their speech, while those in Dipoli (south of Tassayota) mix in Gangam and Lama.

5.3. Dialect intercomprehension and language attitudes

Because of the reported regional differences in Mbelime, comprehension among speakers from different regions was investigated, as well as the informants’ attitudes toward these differences.

The Sous-Commission Linguistique reported that some Mbelime speakers in the Cobly area would have difficulty in understanding those from Korontière if they had not traveled there, but not vice versa. They claimed that when people from Korontière come to Cobly, the Mbelime there reminds them of the true Mbelime words that they have forgotten. The differences were said to be in the tones, some pronunciations, and a few rare vocabulary items. They also claimed that those in Korontière are mocked by those in Cobly for the way they speak Mbelime because they are in a minority in their home area, and they speak Mbelime with “la calculation” (hesitatingly).

The community members in Namoutchaga described the non-pure Mbelime as being “un peu déformé” (a little deformed), but they reported no difficulties in understanding it. More specifically, they said people in Dikounmini, Kouchatié, and Tassayota sometimes raise or lower their tones which makes comprehension a bit difficult, but they still understand them.

As mentioned in Section 5.2.1, the informants in Tassayota initially indicated that Mbelime was the same in the whole region. However, they were more prone to acknowledge differences when they were asked about which Mbelime to write. They then insisted that the Mbelime spoken in Tassayota should be the one used for writing, that the Mbelime in Tassayota, and up to Oukountounou, Oroukouaré, Kountori and Tarpingou is the “good” Mbelime. However, it seemed the emphasis was on what was “good” Mbelime for them. They said that they understand this variety well, and the others are harder for them to understand. They also reported that the speech of Sini, Namoutchaga, Nanagadé and Cobly is not the “good” Mbelime for them, and that people from there mock them when they speak Mbelime. When asked which Mbelime would be the hardest to understand, they reported that the men would find that in Yimpisséri and Namoutchaga the hardest to understand, but
that the women would even understand those in Cobly (presumably because of travel to the market there).

The researchers also asked those in Tassayota if the people in Cobly would understand their Mbelime if that were used for writing. They said “yes”, but they thought the vocabulary differences would be many. However, they also were of the opinion that the “bébédiv” in Cobly do not try to understand those from Korontière because they think the people in Korontière are like the Ditamari, and that they themselves are more “evolved” in their Mbelime. Those in Tassayota did say they would read materials written in the Mbelime from Namouchacha, for example, saying it would not bother them if it were different.

In summary, the greatest difficulties in understanding were reported by the people in the Cobly region of those in the Korontière region, and by the people in the Korontière region of those in many of the areas northwards, from around Namouchacha and north from there. It appears that the Mbelime variety around Korontière is less prestigious than that in the Cobly sous-préfecture. Even the community members in Korontière reported being mocked for their manner of speaking Mbelime by those further north.

5.4. Ethnic identity

The consensus among the informants was that all the speakers of Mbelime may not speak the same way, but they all speak Mbelime and they consider themselves as brothers.

The community members in Namouchacha reported that those who speak pure Mbelime each have their own origins. Those in Namouchacha are said to have come from a hole in the ground, and those in Yimpisséri are said to have descended from the sky in a house. “Namouchacha” means “on va chez la barbe longue” (“we go to the house of the man with the long beard”). They also claimed that the first “ubédo” came from Namouchacha.

Some said that the people in Namouchacha and Yimpisséri are the true “bébédiv” because they do not know where they came from; that is, from which region.

The community in Tassayota said that their origins were in the area of Burkina Faso, and that their ancestors had left there centuries ago due to war. They had settled in Cobly, but due to fighting there, they had moved to the Tassayota area.

There is no chief over the whole region, only “chefs de terrain” (local chiefs). The “bébédiv” do not have their own ceremonies, but they participate in those that have been are imported from the Gangam and Ditamari.

5.5. Language development

The Mbelime written materials in existence are:

- Primers (without tone markings) consisting of three books published by SN/V (a Dutch non-governmental organization working in the area)
- Booklets on agriculture produced by SNV
- A book describing the visit of some women from Cobly to the United Nations International Women’s Conference held in Peking several years ago
- Booklets on “la vie de femmes” (women’s life)
Some manuscripts on health and other topics which are not yet published

The Roman Catholic Church has already translated the Gospel readings for the three-year cycle in the lectionary.

There are weekly radio broadcasts from Tanguïéta on agriculture and health. The radio broadcaster is from Cobly and is an L1 speaker of Mbelime.

5.6. Literacy situation

The Sous-Commission Linguistique reported that there are 36 literacy centers for Mbelime in the Cobly sous-préfecture, plus six others which are connected with churches. There are ten additional centers in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture. Also, there are literacy classes in Mbelime in the Borgou département at Sabo (northwest of Parakou).

At Tassayota the interviewees explained that they had requested a literacy center, but as of yet, they still did not have one in the village. However, the local Assembly of God Church does hold literacy classes, and some of the younger members of the community have attended those, including some of the survey interviewees. They reported that the primer that they used had some differences from the way they speak, but they were able to understand it.

At Dikounmini (near Tassayota) there has been a course to instruct literacy teachers, and the teachers of the course came from Tapoga.

The community members at Tassayota strongly expressed the desire to be included in literacy development efforts, wishing to have input in decisions on development of materials as well as having literacy courses in the area.

5.7. Language use in the church domain

Questions were posed to the Sous-Commission Linguistique and the Tassayota community regarding the languages used in the church services or the mass.

In the Roman Catholic church in Cobly the homily is given in French, followed by a detailed résumé in Mbelime. Parts of the liturgy (Credo, Our Father, and the Eucharist), the songs, the chorale, and the prayers are in Mbelime. As mentioned in Section 5.5, the Gospel readings for the three-year cycle of the lectionary are already translated into Mbelime. The first and second readings (usually Old and New Testament readings) are read in French, followed by an interpretation into Mbelime. Meetings for children, youth and women are held in Mbelime.

In the Assembly of God Church in Cobly the sermon is given in French with translation into Mbelime, the Scriptures are read in French, and the songs and prayers are in French or Mbelime. Again, meetings for children, youth and women are held in Mbelime.

In Tassoyota there had been a Roman Catholic church, but it is now closed. The closest ones are in Koutchatié and Dikounmini and people go there for mass. The Assembly of God church in Tasssayota has a pastor who is a Ditamari speaker, but his sermons are interpreted into Mbelime. The songs, prayers, announcements, and prayer, youth, and women’s meetings are all in Mbelime.
6. Summary and conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to investigate the Mbelime sociolinguistic situation with special attention being paid to the following topics: regional variations of Mbelime, language attitudes, language development, and use of Mbelime in the church domain.

1. Regional variations of Mbelime

The findings show little indication that Mbelime speakers perceive clearly defined regional dialects of Mbelime itself. The only indication of a regional dialect was in reference to the Mbelime spoken in the Korontière region—some even referring to it as “Korontière”. Most often, regional variations in Mbelime were said to be a result of mixing of another language into Mbelime, usually by pronunciation, words or tones. While some differences in the way Mbelime is spoken in the various regions were reported, for the most part, few difficulties in comprehension were reported. The greatest difficulty reported was between those in the north of the area around Cobly, with those in the south around Korontière.

Opinions varied on where pure Mbelime is spoken according to the origin of the respondents. There was an overlap of the Sous-Commission Linguistique data with the answers given in Namoutchaga, and there was an overlap of the data gathered in Namoutchaga and in Tassayota. The overlap for all three data points was at Kountori and the area surrounding it (at least for some of those in attendance at the Sous-Commission interview).

2. Language attitudes

There was evidence of negative attitudes toward the way Mbelime is spoken in the Korontière area. Both the Sous-Commission Linguistique in Cobly, and the people in Korontière reported that speakers from there are mocked because of their speech.

3. Language development

The interest in Mbelime literacy appears to be very high, with a number of literacy classes offered in the area.

4. Language use in the church domain

In the church domain, Mbelime is used quite extensively.

One recommendation from this survey is that the “mixing” of the various neighboring languages into Mbelime be further investigated. Perhaps the perception that there is “mixing” is a result of a language continuum situation, such that, indeed, Mbelime in the different regions has some features of the neighboring languages and does sound like those languages (at least in some linguistic features) to Mbelime speakers from a different area. For example, the Mbelime spoken in the Cobly area might have tones that are more like Kunteni (Nateni) tones than those tones used in the Korontière region. Therefore, to the people from Korontière, the Mbelime in Cobly “sounds like” Kunteni. Often it is not the case that linguistic features are either present or not present, but instead they vary in application depending on geographical region, social status, gender and age of the speakers, and formality-informality of the speech situation. This “mixing” warrants further investigation, a deeper understanding of which would assist language development in the region.
Appendices

Appendix A. Maps of the Mbelime language area

1. Mbelime communities in the Atacora département

Figure 1: Map of the Mbelime language area in the Atacaro département (based on Microsoft Corporation 2002)

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4 The data contained in these maps represent the perceptions of the Mbelime informants (see Section 5.1).
5 This map displays those places known to Microsoft Encarta’s World atlas (Microsoft Corporation 2002), Google’s Map data (Google Maps 2009), and the Atlas monographique des Communes du Bénin (MISD 2001).

The map does not display the following villages, all of which are located in the Boukoumbé sous-préfecture: Dikounmini (Dipoli r.c.), Koutchatié and Tassayota (Koroutiére r.c.), and Oroukouaré (Kountori r.c.). (See Section 5.1 ‘Mbelime language area’ and Section 5.2 ‘Regional variations of Mbelime.’)
2. **Mbelime communities in the Borgou département**

Figure 2: Map of the Mbelime language area in the Borgou département (based on Microsoft Corporation 2002)
Appendix B. Community questionnaire

(rev 5/98, SIL T/B)

Effectué le _____________ à ________________ par ______________________

Participants: __________________________________________________________________

Des quels villages? __________________________________________________________________

Leurs ages: _______________________________________________________________________

Abréviations:
   M= Mbelime, B=Biali, D=Ditamari, DD=Dendi, GG=Gangam, GM=Gourmanché, N=Nateni,
   T=Tchokossi, Fr=French, O=Oui, N=Non

1. LA LANGUE DE L’ENQUETE ET LES LANGUES VOISINES

1.1. Comment vous appelez votre propre langue?

1.2. Les autres gens dans cette région, ceux qui ne sont pas mbelime, ils vous appellent comment?

(Local questionnaire – 1.3. Quelle est l’origine du peuple de ce village?)

Pour trouver l’étendue de la région où la langue est parlée, montrez une photocopie d’une carte de
la région, et posez les questions suivantes. (Utiliser les feutres en couleur)

1.4. Dans quels villages est-ce que votre langue (mbelime) est parlée uniquement? (demandez pour
each village)
   (Encerclez les villages où la langue est parlée; mettez des parenthèses autour des noms des
villages où il n’est pas certain que la langue soit parlée)

1.5. Y a-t-il des villages où votre langue en plus qu’une autre langue sont parlées?
   (Encadrez les villages où l’on trouve des locuteurs de plusieurs langues différentes)

1.6. Dans quels villages parle-t-on une langue différente que la votre? Quel est le nom de cette
langue / ces langues?
   (Soulignez les villages où il est certain que l’on parle une langue différente que celle en
question, et écrivez le nom de celle-ci à coté du village – ceci pour déterminer les frontières
de la langue étudiée)

1.7. Dans la sous-préfecture de Boukoumbé?

1.8. Dans la sous-préfecture de Borgou?

2. DIALECTES DE LA LANGUE DE L’ENQUETE ET INTERCOMPREHENSION ENTRE
LES VARIANTES

2.1 Dans la région où le mbelime est parlée, est-ce que tous les gens parlent exactement comme
vous ?

2.2. (Si non) Parmi les villages où le mbelime est parlée, où est-ce qu’ils parlent exactement
comme vous?
2.3. Est-ce qu’il y a des villages où les gens parlent mbɛlimɛ, mais ils parlent un peu différemment que vous? (Mais vous les comprenez quand même?)
(Si oui, Est-ce que tous les gens dans ces villages parlent comme ça? Les hommes? Les femmes? Les jeunes? Les plus âgées?)

2.4 Dans quels villages est-ce qu’ils parlent très différemment que vous?
– mettre la lettre A à coté des villages qui parlent la variété de l’enquête, B à coté des villages d’un autre groupe, C, etc.;
– tracer les lignes des frontières dialectales avec les lignes continues et pointillées.

2.5. Comment appelle-t-on les variantes qui parlent:

A? ________________________  B? ________________________
C? ________________________  D? ________________________

2.6. Quelles sortes de différences existent entre votre variante et les autres (prononciation, vocabulaire emprunté)?

Variety A – B: ____________________________________________________________

Variety A – C: ____________________________________________________________

Variety A – D: ____________________________________________________________

Variety A – E: ____________________________________________________________

2.7. Quelle (variante) avez-vous le plus de difficulté à comprendre? ________________________

2.8. Laquelle comprenez-vous la plus facilement? ________________________

2.9. Tous les enfants ici au village comprennent-ils bien les locuteurs ...?

A  B  C  D
O  N  O  N  O  N

2.10. Est-ce que vous avez tous les mêmes origines?

2.11. Est-ce que vous avez le même chef?

2.12. Est-ce qu’ils sont comme des étrangers ou comme vos frères?

2.13. Où parle-t-on votre langue le mieux? __________________________________________

Pourquoi? Tous les gens?

3. ALPHABETISATION / DEVELOPPEMENT

3.1. Pour écrire votre langue, il faut choisir
la variante de quel région pour l’écrire?
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Et, si l’on écrit en cette variante, sera-t-il aussi utiliser / acceptable dans autres régions? O N

Si NON, Pourquoi?

___________________________________________________________________________

3.2. (Développement): les choses écrite en mbêlimê? ________________________________

3.3. (Développement): les gens qui écrivent en mbêlimê ____________________________

(quelles variantes?)

3.4. Il-y-a-t-il des classes d’alphabétisation au village? O N

Dans quelle(s) langue(s)? ________________________________

3.5. Est-ce qu’il y a des émissions en mbêlimê à la radio ? O N

Si oui, d’où viennent les gens qui font les émissions? (quels villages?)

4. INFORMAISON GENERALE SUR LA COMMUNAUTE

4.1. Population au village:

4.2. Il y a-t-il des mariages mixtes? Si OUI combien?

: _____ :____ :_____ :_____ :_____ :_____ :_____ :

4.3. Il y a-t-il des églises au village? Lesquelles?

___________________________________________________________________________

Quelle(s) langue(s) est / sont utilisée(s) pour?

− le serment / l’homilie?
− pour les chants?
− les prières?
− les announce?
− les réunions de prière:
− les réunion des jeunes?
− les réunions des femmes

4.4. Il y a-t-il des mosquées?

Quelle(s) langue(s) est / sont utilisée(s) pour?

− prêcher?
− traduire la lecture du Coran?
Appendix C. Village names

During the course of the interviews a number of names from the Cobly sous-préfecture map (Ministère du Plan 1994) were mentioned and corrected by the informants. These names are listed below, first by the name on the map, and then by the correction given by the interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Otohoun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trapingou</td>
<td>Taripingou / Tarpingou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakotiaga</td>
<td>Kekutitieké</td>
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<tr>
<td>Didan</td>
<td>Didani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sokountienou</td>
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<td>Douangou</td>
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References


