Language Survey of Gemzek and Gaduwa
(Mayo-Tsanaga Division, Far North Province)

Edward Brye

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References
1. Introduction

This report describes sociolinguistic research of Gemzek and Gaduwa, both found in the Mayo-Tsanaga Division of the Far North Province of Cameroon. Research was carried out in Gaduwa on February 19 and in Gemzek on February 25–26, 2000 by Dr. Etienne Sadembouo of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages of the University of Yaoundé, and Edward and Elizabeth Brye of SIL. Elizabeth Castelli, also of SIL, was present to assist and to observe the research process.

We are grateful for the welcome received from regional and local government, church, and traditional leaders and for their cooperation and participation in aiding this research.

1.1 The Purpose of the Research

The study was carried out to clarify the relationship of Gemzek to Zulgwa (also called Zulgo) and to clarify Gaduwa’s relationship with speech varieties surrounding it. Our primary interest was to gain a preliminary measurement of Gemzek speakers’ understanding of a text of spoken Zulgo and, in conjunction with this, to determine whether Gaduwa was a distinct speech variety or, as stated in notes of a language survey carried out in 1992, “a village of Gemzek” (Bradley and Bradley 1992). A goal of both surveys was to explore the value of carrying out a language development project in the groups being researched. (See section 1.3.)

1.2 Linguistic Classification

Dieu and Renaud (1983) in the Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun (also referred to as ALCAM) list the languages and their codes as follows: Gemzek [161] and Zulgo [also 161]. They include both in the following linguistic classification: Afro-Asiatic, Tchadique, Centre, Centre-Ouest, Wandala-Maja, Sud. In Dieu and Renaud (1983), Gaduwa had not yet been discovered as a distinct speech variety, but in that it is next to Zulgo and Gemzek, its linguistic classification might be similar. Gaduwa does not appear in ALCAM as either a language or a village, but is listed as a language in the Atlas of Breton and Fohtung (1991).

In the Ethnologue, Grimes (1996) provides the following descriptions, including name, alternate name(s), code, location, linguistic classification, and other comments, for each language:


**GEMZEK** (GEMJEK, GUEMSHEK) [GND] 8,000 to 10,000 (1992 SIL). Eastern edge of Mandara Mountains, north of Meri, Tokombere Subdivision, Mayo-Sava Division, Far North Province, 16 villages. Afro-Asiatic, Chadic, Biu-Mandara, A, A.5. Slight dialect differences between villages. Related to Zulgw, and speakers appear to be quite bilingual in Zulgw. The Meri, Mbuco, Muyang, and Mada languages are in the surrounding areas. 5% to 15% literate. Survey needed.

1.3 Background and Previous Research

What follows is an overview of the progressive understanding of Gemzek in relation to Zulgo.

Based on a language survey report by Wedekind in 1973, Beat and Irma Haller of SIL started studying the Zulgo speech variety in 1975. No special efforts were made to carry out another survey.

In 1977, a survey of Zulgo carried out by Daniel Barreteau from the Organization for Scientific and Technical Research Overseas (ORSTOM) revealed a lexicostatistical similarity of 87.5% between word lists of Zulgo and Gemzek. Barreteau considered Zulgo to be comprised of three dialects: Zulgo, Mineo, and Gemzek. Comprehension would be possible between the three dialects, but between Zulgo and Gemzek, it would be more difficult.

As the Hallers moved from language learning to a development program of the Zulgo language in 1980, a Gemzek pastor by the name of Daniel Douatai joined the Zulgo Translation Committee (B. Haller, 2000, personal communication). His participation and contributions were accepted by a large majority of both Zulgo and Gemzek speakers. There were quite a number of Gemzek-speaking leaders on the revision committee. It was here that discussions went on between Zulgo and Gemzek speakers about the use of different words or expressions followed by the group’s making a final decision about them. The policy of this group—a policy that B. Haller agreed with—was that the two speech varieties should not be mixed; Zulgo was chosen as the standard written speech form. As many individuals as possible were included on the Reviewers’ Committee that met regularly. The inclusion of representatives from the Gemzek speech community was done to facilitate the acceptance of Zulgo literature. In these meetings, no debate or question came up as to whether or not there would be a need to prepare separate materials in Gemzek. The Gemzek-speaking translator died the following year.

Prior to the Hallers’ departure in 1987, literacy programs went on in some villages of the Gemzek area—at least Massoroh, Gaduwa, and Guguleng—but no classes in Makwar, Sirem, Kwatama, Dzatar, Manzuf, Haldala, Magra, Magrama, Kilemese and Biye. After the Hallers’ departure, literacy classes continued, and Silas Douda was responsible for organizing them. Through correspondence and various visits to Cameroon since 1987, B. Haller learned that Gemzek people were using the Zulgo literature.

Several years after the Hallers’ departure in 1987, the question of language was suddenly raised, “but not explicitly” (B. Haller 2000, personal communication). It started when the Gemzeks wanted to have their own hymnbook, a collection of newly composed songs. B. Haller (and others as mentioned in the previous paragraph) was aware of differences between Gemzek and Zulgo, and he wanted to provide a bridge between the two languages.

In 1992, a rapid appraisal language survey conducted in three Gemzek-speaking villages—Guirziga, Sirem, and Serewa—led Bradley and Bradley (1992) to conclude that:

Lexically Gemzek appeared to be fairly closely related to Zulgw. The Gemzek people recognize this linguistic proximity and evidently have no difficulty recognizing this and understanding Zulgw given a certain amount of contact with Zulgw speakers which they normally acquire before the age of 12 years.

However, they do not seem to feel any particular ethnic kinship with the Zulgw, and they each perceive their respective languages to be different from the other.

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1During our February 2000 survey, Silas Douda indicated that there had been only one Gemzek person on the Zulgo translation team, Daniel Douatai, who introduced Zulgo literacy to the community at Gaduwa, but died in 1992. Although the present Zulgo translator did not himself visit the Gemzek villages, he recalls that literacy was carried out at least in the village of Massoroh.
From the standpoint of comprehension, it seems that the Gemzek would be adequately served by the Zulgwa Scriptures. There seems to be a positive attitude towards reading Zulgwa, and apparently several Gemzek churches are already using the Zulgwa New Testament in their services. However, this would probably require a concerted effort in Zulgwa literacy for the Gemzek.

Bradley and Bradley (1992) also noted that the church in Sirem was hesitant to use the New Testament translation for fear that its congregation would understand neither oral nor written Zulgo. In contrast to the people of Sirem village, other Gemzek speakers were able to make use of the Zulgo Scriptures (Bradley and Bradley 1992). Notes from the 1992 rapid appraisal interviews revealed that the Zulgo New Testament was being used in the centrally located Gemzek-speaking village of Guirziga where a mother tongue Zulgo-speaking evangelist was working and in the northernmost village of Serawa (where, according to the 1987 census, the population was about 16,000 of which, the Bradleys report roughly half was Gemzek). Moreover, they found that Gemzek speakers had no interest in seeing Gemzek written, though they viewed themselves as a distinct ethnic group speaking a language different from Zulgo. All of these factors brought Bradley and Bradley (1992) to conclude that:

Given the apparent lack of interest among the Gemzek for developing their own language, it seems questionable whether such a project in Gemzek would be successful. Also, considering the development of Zulgwa and the existence of the Zulgwa New Testament, the present situation does not seem to justify the development of Gemzek, and it seems reasonable to recommend that the Bible translation need status of Gemzek be revised to “unlikely translation need.”

As a next step, the Bradleys recommended that Zulgo literacy classes be conducted in Gemzek villages.

On November 9, 1999, Josias Manasie and Jakob Mansie, representing the Gemzek-speaking religious communities, came to the SIL office in Yaoundé to state that they were unable to understand Zulgo when it was preached. They went on to say that Gemzek and Zulgo did not share the same origins, and that the Gemzeks would like their own translation of the Bible. Upon further questioning, we learned that Manasie was from the village of Gaduwa. We reviewed the 1992 survey report and background notes, where it seemed clear that Gaduwa was a Gemzek village where speakers spoke only slightly differently from those of the other Gemzek villages.2

That same month, SIL’s Alan Starr in Maroua sought clarification from Mr. Haller who expressed his conviction that speakers of Gemzek were, in fact, able to understand Zulgo and he considered Gemzek to be a dialect of Zulgo.

A survey applying recorded text testing (RTT) was planned for mid-February. The Gemzek RTT and the Gaduwa Rapid Appraisal surveys would be carried out pending a review of findings of a preliminary meeting to be attended by a group of broad-based church leaders representing the Gemzek-speaking religious community.

On February 14, 2000 in the village of Gaduwa, the meeting of Gemzek church leaders was presided over by Simon Nassi, a Gaduwa-speaking evangelist and pastor who resides in Gaduwa village. He and others (but not all) stated that the Zulgo New Testament was not understood in Gemzek church meetings. (See minutes of the meeting in appendix F.)

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2The Bradley and Bradley report (1992:3) indicated that there was one village listed among the villages of Gemzek; the researchers’ notes from the same survey contained supplementary information not included in the Gemzek survey report. These notes stated that all 16 Gemzek villages were “very homogeneous linguistically” but that “Gaduwa village speaks a bit differently but with no difficulties of intercomprehension in either direction.”
2 Methodology
The recent developments described in the previous section meant that the results of the 1992 survey would have to be revisited in order to answer two questions. One question was, could Gemzek speakers understand Zulgo? Secondly, was Gaduwa part of the Gemzek variety dialect/language? To answer the second question, it would be necessary to measure Gemzek speakers' understanding of a Zulgo text. We chose to employ the recorded text testing (RTT) method based on the intelligibility testing procedure documented by Eugene Casad (1974). To answer the first question, we carried out a rapid appraisal (RA) survey in the village of Gaduwa. The RA research approach is described in Bergman (1991) and Stalder (1996). We conducted a group interview of the sociolinguistic domains of dialectology, multilingualism, and language viability and vitality; and an individual interview with a prominent church leader. In addition, Dr. Sadembouo elicited a list of 126 words using the ALCAM list (see Dieu and Renaud 1983:132–133) from the main Gaduwa village (also called Gaduwa) to be compared with word lists of Gemzek and Zulgo.3

3 Results
After carrying out the rapid appraisal in the village of Gaduwa, the research team gained sufficient evidence to conclude that Gaduwa was a variety of Gemzek. Rather than carry out further research of Gaduwa villages/quarters, we opted to use our remaining time to plan and conduct an RTT to measure Gemzek speakers’ understanding of Zulgo.

The remainder of this report details the findings of the survey team. Following the results of the rapid appraisal survey conducted in the village of Gaduwa and the lexicostatistical comparative analysis of word lists of Gaduwa, Gemzek, and Zulgo, are the findings from the Gemzek RTT of Zulgo.

3.1 Rapid Appraisal of Gaduwa
This section contains results from a rapid appraisal survey of the speech variety called Gaduwa-Gemzek (known in ALCAM as Gaduwa [185]). As such, it includes data obtained from sociolinguistic group questionnaires about dialectology, multilingualism, and language vitality and viability; an individual interview with a prominent church leader; and a lexicostatistical analysis of word lists of Gemzek and Zulgo. (A copy of the questionnaire is available from SIL-Cameroon’s sociolinguistic department.) Research of Gaduwa was carried out only in the village of Gaduwa which speakers from there also refer to as Gamsheli or Gamsili. It is the largest village of this speech variety and claims a number of significantly smaller villages or quarters as belonging to it (see section 3.1.3 for recent figures from the voter rolls). The village lies on the road that is northwest of the other Gaduwa-speaking villages or quarters.

We conducted a group interview with five men of whom the village chief was the primary spokesman. We used French, and a speaker interpreted the questions for the chief.

3.1.1 Name
The name of the people is “Gaduwa”, and the name of the language is “Gaduwa-Gemzek”, with “Gemzek” being the general name.

3The ALCAM word list we used was a revised version with six additional words. The elicited list can be obtained from Cameroon SIL’s Survey Department.
3.1.2 Origins
The Gaduwa claim to come from Makabay near Maroua.

3.1.3 Dialectology

3.1.3.1 Reported Intercomprehension (What the Group Reported in the Interview)
Distinctions in pronunciation exist between the following two groupings of Gaduwa villages, but those interviewed claim that intercomprehension is easy between them. The population figures in the following table are based on recent voter rolls obtained during the Gaduwa group interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group One:</th>
<th>Pop.</th>
<th>*Group Two:</th>
<th>Pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gemsheli/Gaduwa</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>Medgejelay</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrejey</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mengerey</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galagadwa</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Dalagbo</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didiring</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Gergasa</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mcteming</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osolombo</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwapa</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepartah</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klemotuesh</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group Two: Gemzek villages

The villages of group Two are “brothers” with the Gaduwa who left the Gaduwa-speaking area and now speak as Gemzek. Medgejelay, Mengerey, Dalagbo, and Gergasa all speak the same with only slight differences when compared with the other Gaduwa villages. Mutual intelligibility exists between both groups I and II as well as with Gemzek speakers.

3.1.3.2 Additional Evidence for Viewing Gaduwa as Part of Gemzek
As mentioned in section 3.1.1, the chief of the village of Gaduwa referred to the Gaduwa-Gemzek speech variety as belonging to the Gemzek language. Gaduwa speakers from Gaduwa consider themselves to be one with the people of Gemzek, sharing a common culture and tradition with them. Previous contact is not required for Gaduwa speakers to understand Gemzek. Using the ALCAM word list, Dr. Sadembouo elicited a list of 126 words from Gaduwa and compared it with the same list of Gemzek words; a lexicostatistical comparison of these word lists revealed a 94% similarity of shared apparent cognates. This high percentage of lexical similarity and the close proximity of the villages to each other further support the claim of intercomprehension between Gemzek and Gaduwa-Gemzek speakers. The Gaduwa interview revealed that the people can use their mother tongue when speaking with someone from Gemzek, and that Gemzeks likewise use...
their mother tongue and each understands the other easily. The same holds true for children less than six years of age. Moreover, as presented in section 1.1, speakers of Gaduwa-Gemzek refer to themselves as “Gaduwa” and call their language “Gaduwa-Gemzek”. According to the Gaduwa village group interview, the village where Gaduwa-Gemzek is spoken best is in the village of Gugelang (also spelled as Gugulez), which, according to the February 14 Gemzek meeting held at Gaduwa, is a Gemzek village. Moreover, the translator from Tala-Zulgo said that he was able to recognize the differences in the manner of speaking of Gemzek and Gaduwa, and that these two speech varieties belonged to the same language. For all of these reasons, we further conclude that Gaduwa-Gemzek speech variety belongs to Gemzek.

3.1.4 Multilingualism

French is used, though rarely, at the local market in Gaduwa, at the dispensary, for meetings of regional chiefs, and for all facets of elementary school.

Fulfulde is widely used and understood as a language of wider communication (LWC) for Gaduwa speakers. It is reportedly used almost daily in the village, and the youth are its best speakers. Fulfulde is used for communicating with foreigners who live in the villages, visit them, or who meet them at the markets. Fulfulde is also spoken at the clinic. Fulfulde is used in the local markets in Gaduwa and at the “far-away” clinic.

Fulfulde is used to communicate with people of the surrounding languages—namely Mafa, Merey, Muyang, Mbuko, and Zulgo—as there is reportedly no intercomprehension with speakers of these languages. (See appendix E for ALCAM map.)

Both Fulfulde and French are spoken by the regional chiefs at their reunions.

Merey is a language that is understood due to influence of intermarriages of Merey-speaking women with Gaduwa-Gemzek-speaking men. Understanding Merey is “difficult” for them; they have to learn Merey in order to understand it.

The chief of the canton has united the Gaduwa-speaking people with Zulgo speakers, but the two reportedly do not understand one another. They believe their language to be separate from Zulgo as evidenced by their young children reportedly being unable to understand it when it is heard.

Certain words are understood of the Mbuko language.

Mandara is used at Tokombere during the meetings of regional chiefs.

3.1.5 Language Vitality and Viability

When asked which languages apart from their own they would prefer to read and write, the Gaduwa named Fulfulde, and then French.

When asked whether they would like to learn to read and write in Zulgo or would like their children to do so, the people answered “no.” They do not share a common culture or origin with Zulgo. Nevertheless, similar to what transpires with Merey speakers, Gaduwa speakers enjoy “a lot of intermarriage” with Zulgo speakers and this fosters the understanding of certain Zulgo words. The contact with Zulgo speakers at the market and through intermarriage results in some people being able to understand Zulgo.

Following is a summary of how those interviewed report their language use in different domains of life and of their expressed attitudes toward their language and its potential for development.

3.1.6 Language Use

Interviewees state that the Gaduwa-Gemzek speech variety holds a prominent place in the home and for work, so it does not appear that Gaduwa-Gemzek is in immediate danger of being replaced
by another language. No one felt that the youth speak another language more than Gaduwa-
Gemzek. The youth do not mix Gaduwa-Gemzek and Fulfulde. The elderly speak only Gaduwa-
Gemzek.

The mother tongue is used for communicating in all domains of life (except at the dispensary),
and for the public meetings of regional chiefs. Gaduwa-Gemzek is the main language used in the
home, in conversations with friends of the same age and during the recreational recess at schools,
when working in the fields, at the local and large market (which take place in Gaduwa proper), and
for public announcements and during traditional ceremonies.

Although Fulfulde is used daily, it is used less than Gaduwa-Gemzek. Those interviewed believe
that this will continue indefinitely. Gaduwa-Gemzek is not mixed with any other language. Those
interviewed said that the people possess “a love” for their language and they would like to learn to
read and write it. In fact, for the past three years there have been literacy classes held at Pastor
Nassi’s church building. As mentioned in section 1.3, a compilation of songs was published in
1995.

3.1.6.1 Language Maintenance and Shift

Children are the best speakers of Fulfulde. During recreation times at school, the children use it
along with their mother tongue. When they occasionally use Fulfulde at home, the elderly who do
not understand it are discontent. Both Gaduwa-Gemzek and Fulfulde are used daily, but Fulfulde is
used less. French is rarely used.

3.1.6.2 Language Use in the Churches

A meeting took place with a prominent local religious leader for Gaduwa, Pastor and Evangelist
Simon Nassi who is also the President of the Gemzek Language Committee. His church began 30
years ago, and 250 people now attend. He estimates that roughly half of those attending the church
own a Bible. The Fulfulde language is used when there are strangers to communicate with;
otherwise, Gemzek is spoken. Bible reading is done in Fulfulde and translated into Gemzek.
Gemzek is the language used for singing, making announcements and preaching. Gemzek is also
used for youth meetings and Bible studies.

There are, however, certain elderly Gemzek-speaking people in the village who do not
understand Fulfulde. Pastor Nassi, who encourages the use of the mother tongue, reports that the
majority of the people in his congregation have demonstrated a desire to learn to read and write
their own language.

3.1.6.3 Attitudes Toward Gemzek-Gaduwa

Interviewees at the village of Gaduwa expressed a strong interest in developing literature in their
language, particularly as a means for preserving their culture. Local church leaders indicated a
strong interest in Gemzek literacy and language development.4

3.1.7 Language Development Potential

According to Watters (1990:6.7.1), there are three factors that affect the nature and development
of language programs: the homogeneity of the linguistic community, their openness to change and
development, and the presence at the local level of a middle-aged leadership.

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4Language development is occurring or has occurred in four adjacent languages: Zulgo, Mbuko, Muyang, and
Merey.
3.1.7.1 Homogeneity of the linguistic community
None of the Gaduwa-Gemzek villages is cut off from the others, even during the height of the rainy season. Drivable roads pass by all villages of “Gemzek on the Plain” but none pass by “Gemzek on the Plateau”.

Intermarriage most often occurs with speakers of Merey, Zulgo, and Gemzek—the language groups adjacent to Gaduwa.

Since the ground is so productive, a few people from elsewhere—namely from Meri and Tayaba—come to Gaduwa to cultivate the land and also to obtain water. When these outsiders decide to stay, they eventually learn to speak Gaduwa-Gemzek.

3.1.7.2 Openness to change
In Gaduwa, there is a development committee responsible for maintaining the conditions of roads and the construction and upkeep of classrooms.

Approximately 80 children attend primary school. A good number of children from Meri and a few also from the Zulgo area come to attend the primary school at Gaduwa; at the same time, some children from Gaduwa go to the village of Meri to attend the primary school there. About half of those who complete primary school will continue on to secondary school, usually the one in Tokombere. The vast majority of those who complete school at any level eventually return to the village to cultivate the ground.

3.1.7.3 Middle-aged leadership
An important factor in determining the viability of a language project is the presence of a middle-aged leadership. Gaduwa village leaders live right in the village and most are nearly 60 years old, beyond middle-aged. However, those interviewed believe that today’s children will assume the leadership when those who are now leaders eventually die.

3.1.8 Recapitulation
Interviewees at Gaduwa view themselves as forming a distinct group belonging to the Gaduwa-Gemzek speech variety of Gemzek. They admit that there are slight differences of pronunciation of their mother tongue, but nothing that hinders comprehension. Fulfulde is widely used and understood as a LWC, but the mother tongue continues to hold prominence in the daily lives of Gaduwa-Gemzek speakers. The elderly speak only their mother tongue. Gaduwa-Gemzek does not seem in danger of being replaced anytime soon despite the fact that all languages surrounding them are in various stages of development. The Gaduwa-Gemzek speaking community is highly motivated to see the Gemzek language developed, as evidenced by the initiative taken to produce the Gemzek hymnbook in 1995. Preservation of culture is a motivation for wanting to develop the mother tongue.

There has been a class at the evangelist’s church for the past three years for adults to learn to write in Gaduwa-Gemzek. There is a book of songs written in Gemzek. (See section 1.3 “Background”.)

4. Gemzek/Zulgo Recorded Text Testing
In this section, we present what was learned in carrying out a language survey of Gemzek in relation to Zulgo, employing recorded text testing.
4.1 Sites of Text Elicitation

In the Zulgo village of Tala-Zulgo, where linguist B. Haller used to work, Silas Douda supplied an anecdotal story from his personal experience. After recording this text, we designed comprehension questions and inserted them into the tape. (See appendices for an English translation of the recorded texts.)

4.2 Sites of Text Testing

From the Gemzek village of Sirem, our team went to Mora and then drove southward until reaching the northernmost Gemzek village of Serawa “on the plain”. We asked a direct question of a “man we met on the street” about the languages used in this village. He told us that Zulgo was used most, in second place was Gemzek, and in addition, Mandara and Mbuko were also spoken.

The next village to the south was Magra—perhaps a Serawa quarter. We began administering the RTT, but discontinued after testing five participants because we were finding it difficult to find Gemzek speakers who did not have a parent or spouse who was not Zulgo. Scores of the five people tested were high in view of the noncomprehension reported by the Gemzek community earlier in the month. The average (mean) was 9.7 correct responses for 12 questions (or 80.1%) on the Zulgo recorded text test tape.

We passed by the next village of Mokolopo when residents there told us that they were Mbuko speakers.

Continuing southward to Guirziga II, the village most central along the string of villages of “Gemzek on the Plain,” 10 individuals—5 young men of 13 to 21 years of age, 4 women aged 25–30, and a nine-year old girl—listened to the Zulgo test tape. We looked for young people on the assumption that they would have had less contact with Zulgo speakers than would the older population. The group achieved a mean score of 80% with a standard deviation of 1.1 or 11.46%. The nine-year old girl answered 71% of the questions correctly. The standard deviation of less than 15% suggests true intelligibility as opposed to bilingualism (Grimes 1987:50). Between 70% and 85% “is an area of marginal intelligibility where some communication is satisfactory and some is not” (J. Grimes 1995:22). Intelligibility scores of 85% or above are considered high enough to insure good communication, so it is reasonable to suggest that the Gemzek speakers of Guirziga II and Magra, with 80% intelligibility of the Zulgo text, might be able to share a common literature with Zulgo speakers if other sociological factors are also favorable. The adolescent boys, in fact, all claimed they had no opportunities to interact with Zulgo speakers. We do not know, however, to what extent they or any of the Gemzek speakers of the village participated in the literacy program that had been introduced by a Zulgo-speaking evangelist as noted by the survey team in 1992 (see section 1.3). What we did learn from a man during our time in Guirziga II was that the church he was attending in the village was happily using the Zulgo New Testament and that he considered Zulgo and Gemzek to be the same language.

We carried out an RTT to a group of 20–25 men assembled in the village of Jaslar. The group gave 9.5 correct responses to 12 questions, or 79.19%, which lines up with the mean scores for the individuals tested in the other two villages.

The fact that the group in Jaslar claimed to understand only a little of the Zulgo text should not be overlooked, however. According to O’Leary (1994:68), “self-reports of how much subjects believe that they understood after taking RTT are useful checks on that test…” It may be that the RTT was not challenging enough.

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5Simons (1979:25) states that the group testing method is appropriate for finding the “upper potential” of the group.
5. Discussion and Conclusions

Gemzek speakers of various villages have used Zulgo literature in the past. However, attitudes have reportedly changed in recent years so that, now, Gemzek representatives indicate that Gemzek speakers are unable to understand oral Zulgo.

Language surveyors in 1992 determined that Gemzek speakers were able to understand Zulgo. This conclusion was reviewed by a sociolinguistic research trip in February 2000, and the sociolinguistic findings verify the 1992 conclusion with linguistic data. Linguistically, scores of three Gemzek villages—Jaslar, Guirziga II, and Magra—are nearly identical (79%–80%) and above the 70% minimum threshold for sharing of literature in Zulgo. We now have greater reason to believe that such understanding of Zulgo would be enhanced by Gemzek speakers putting forth the effort to learn written Zulgo as their fellow Gemzeks have successfully done in the past. Only one written form should be necessary for Zulgo and Gemzek. However, sociolinguistic research must consider not only the precision of language science but also the variability of the feelings of peoples over time. Sociologically, the information is inconsistent. On one hand, certain Gemzeks claim to lack a cultural identification with Zulgo and, with this, the inability to understand Zulgo. On the other hand, there is the claim that Gemzeks do understand Zulgo and are able to use the Zulgo Scriptures as they have in the past.

The limits and scope of our sociolinguistic research did not permit us to explore how widespread or deeply felt attitudes are throughout Gemzek. This variance may well be a function either of perception or of biases—or both—of certain subgroups or individuals within the Gemzek-speaking community in the recent past. Alternatively, it may be a function of the experiences of peoples, depending on the Gemzek village.

6. Recommendations

If the Gemzek community were to organize a language committee and begin work on their own language, SIL would be willing to offer consultant help to the language committee in the area of orthography development and literacy. After that, if time and personnel resources permit, an SIL consultant might be able to help with an adaptation of the Zulgo New Testament text into Gemzek, but no SIL team would be assigned full time to Gemzek. In the interests of preserving the unity of the people, SIL could offer consultant help on the side. A first priority could be the development of an orthography and the adaptation of a Gospel, working in collaboration with the members of the language committee. In this way, unity of the Gemzek community will continue and the speakers will be encouraged to assume primary ownership of the overall effort.

7. Changes to the Ethnologue and ALCAM

- The “Zulgo” language should be changed to “Zulgo-Gemzek” with there being three dialects: Zulgo, Mineo, and Gemzek.
- Gaduwa-Gemzek is a subdialect of Gemzek.
Appendices

Appendix A: Gemzek Results of Zulgo

Guirziga II: 10 individual responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject No.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>ZULGO (Correct Responses/Total Questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.5/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.5/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guirziga II’s Aggregate RTT Score = 96 of 120 (80% correct)
Mean = 9.6 (mean in percentage = 80 %)
Standard Deviation: 1.1 = 11.46 %
Each individual had been born in Guirziga II, used Gemzek at home, and had a Gemzek-speaking mother.

Appendix B: Zulgo Text (in English)

1. Some time ago, a “monsieur” had called me to a ceremony of his twins.
   QUESTION: Why had a “monsieur” called him?
   ANSWER: To celebrate the twins

2. He told me to come. “Everyone is going to dance. Everyone is going to celebrate my twins.” At the moment I arrived, everyone was having millet in hand.
   QUESTION: What did the people carry with them?
   ANSWER: the millet

3. The millet that they collected, the father of the family had brought the wine. He gave the wine to him who had brought the millet.
   QUESTION: What did the father give in exchange for the millet?
   ANSWER: wine

4. Those who were there drank wine together.
   QUESTION: What did they do together?
   ANSWER: They drank.

5. At this moment, many people were there to dance. In the course of their dance, the father of the family sat down and was very happy. During all the day, they were there to drink. At the moment
that they were in the process of drinking the wine together, I was in the process of seeing how the celebration took place.

QUESTION: What did he do during the time the others were drinking?
ANSWER: He was looking at the people dance or seeing how the celebration took place.

6. When the people were dancing during this date, it was the time to liberate the twins.

QUESTION: It was the time for what?
ANSWER: To “liberate” the twins.

7. Those who were there to make a sacrifice (for) the twins...we started to accompany the father of the family outside with the twins and his wife.

QUESTION: Who did they accompany?
ANSWER: The man, the/his wife, and the twins.

8. Then, they returned inside while dancing. At the moment they were dancing, the father of the family was very happy. And then, he brought the large “kolas” to share with everyone—

QUESTION: What did he share with everybody?
ANSWER: “kola”//kola (in Fulfulde)

9. —to share with those who were watching the dance. Those who were in this village were happy because of the ceremony of the twins. Toward evening, we began to return home.

QUESTION: When did they return?
ANSWER: at night fall

10. ...with our “kolas” in hand. When we arrived at home we found our families in good health.

QUESTION: How did they find their families?
ANSWER: (they found them) in good health.

11. Our families were there to wait for what we brought from the party.

QUESTION: What where their families awaiting?
ANSWER: whatever they brought back from the party

12. I took out the “kola” that I received at the party. The children and the others of my family were happy. Those of my family who had received the “kola” were happy.

QUESTION: Who or which ones of the family were happy?
ANSWER: Those who received the kolas

13. This is how the celebration of the twins took place that day.

NO COMPREHENSION QUESTION WAS DESIGNED FOR THIS SENTENCE.
Appendix C: Gemzek Hometown RTT Text (Taken at Sirem)

1. *Today in the morning, my wife...she said to climb into the granary to bring the beans.*
   QUESTION: Where did his wife ask him to go?
   ANSWER: to the granary

2. *And, then, I brought the beans.*
   QUESTION: What did he bring?
   ANSWER: beans

3. *I sold the beans at 350 francs (per cup).*
   QUESTION: For how much (money) did he sell the beans?
   ANSWER: 350 francs
Appendix D: Gemzek Villages
Note: The string of villages from Shirem north to Serawa is called "Gemzek on the Plain," and there is a road connecting them. The string of villages extending from Najeyle north to Fere is called "Gemzek on the Plateau," and it is not accessible by road.

Note: According to sources in Shirem, there are only four Gaduwa-Gemzek villages: Gaduwa, Mosero, Mambaza, and Gugulez.
Appendix E: ALCAM Map
Appendix F: Compte-rendu de la réunion à Gadawa en ce qui concerne la langue Gemjek. (mardi le 15 février 2000)

Présents à la réunion:
Etienne Sadembouo de ANACLAC (Association NAtionale des Comités de LAngues Camerounaises)
Alan Starr de la SIL
Elizabeth Castelli de la SIL

Le comité de traduction:
Nassi Simon - président - (évangeliste de Gadawa)
Silas Abram de Sherem (absent)
Bemak André - premier secrétaire (absent)
Chiyok Philippe - deuxième secrétaire
Tiyahod Pierre - trésorier principale - (évangeliste de Zulgo) (absent)
David Loukomo - trésorier adjoint (absent)
David Louantaï ( absent)
Hassan Etienne ( absent)
Ndjinte Esaïe - commissaire aux comptes
Peirre Gaunokom
Taboaol Salomon - consillier
Kambezing Jonas - détenteur de clerc
Sawaram Jonas - traducteur et membre consultant

Eglises représentées à la réunion:
Eglise Evangélique de Gadaewa-plaines (21 personnes)
Eglise Evangélique de Gadawa-montagnes (2 personnes)
Eglise Evangélique de Godolen (6 personnes)
Eglise Evangélique de Mosso (4 personnes)
Eglise Evangélique de Kwatama (1 personne)
Eglise Evangélique de Sherem (1 personne)
Eglise Evangélique de Jatar (1 personne)
Eglise Evangélique de de Mokolo-po (1 personne)
Eglise Evangélique de Magra (1 personne)
Eglise Evangélique de Serawa (1 personne)
Eglise Adventiste des plaines (1 personne)

Autres églises qui font parties du comité mais qui n’étaient pas représentées à la réunion (la liste n’est pas exhaustive):

Eglise Evangélique de Magra
Eglise Evangélique de Gilziga
Eglise catholique de Gadawa-plaines
Eglise catholique de Gadawa-montagnes
Eglise adventiste de Gadawa-plaines
Eglise adventiste de Serawa

Le président du comité a offert ses excuses pour le secrétaire, le trésorier et autres membres qui étaient absents. La réunion prévue en janvier était mieux représentée - la lettre annonçant cette réunion-ci n’a été lue que lundi le 14 février.

Le président du comité de traduction a présenté une méditation de Philippiens 2. 14-18. Ce passage montre comment les enfants de Dieu devraient œuvrer pour le Seigneur.

Etienne Sadembouo voulait que tous présents à la réunion soient d’accord sur le plan. Sa suggestion était de répondre ensemble aux question suivantes:

Qui sommes-nous?
Qu’est-ce que c’est qu’une langue?

Que voulons-nous et pourquoi?
Comment allons-nous le réaliser?

Alan Starr a parlé au nom de la SIL. Il a offert ses excuses pour la réunion râtée en janvier. Il a offert ses excuses pour la réunion râtée en janvier. Il présente lui-même (représentant du bureau régional de la SIL à Maroua), Elizabeth Castelli (enseignante) et Etienne Sadembouo (directeur-adjoint d’ANACLAC). Il avait annoncé que Dr. Sadembouo dirigerait la réunion.

Dr. Sadembouo a remercié ceux présents. Il a indiqué qu’il est chercheur. Il a premièrement été envoyé à l’Extrême Nord il y a plusieurs années par MINREST pour découvrir les différentes langues qui sont parlées en différents endroits. Il voulait assurer l’auditoire que le Gadawa est connu.

Il a donné un bref histoire d’ANACLAC. Le but d’ANACLAC est de pousser les gens à former des comités pour le déveoppement de leurs langues. Il a couligné le fait que les langues sont pour tous.

1. Qu’est-ce que c’est qu’une langue?
On peut apprendre ce que c’est qu’une langue particulière en faisant une comparaison de différentes langues. Une langue est une addition de plusieurs façons de parler. Par exemple, le Fufuldé de différentes régions est parlé de différentes façons il y a même des noms diverses, mais l’ensemble est considéré comme étant la même langue. La raison c’est que même s’ils parlent différemment ils se comprennent entre eux (la majorité des parolse est comprise) Si les gens parlent sans se comprendre, on considère qu’il y a 2 langues.

M. Sadembouo a donné l’opportunité à l’auditoire de poser des questions:

Q. Il y a des différences entre les dialectes - il y a un approfondissement qui puisse se faire entre 2 personnes qui parlent le même dialecte qui ne puisse pas se faire entre deux personnes parlant deux dialectes. Qu’est-ce qu’on fait face à cette situation?

R. Il y a différents niveaux de langues - une langue simple de tous les gours et une langue approdondie, où il fait bien connaître la langue. Plusieurs personnes partagent l’opinion que c’est
difficile de communiquer avec les personnes d’un dialecte différent. Parler une langue c’est naturelle, mais écrire une langue est compliqué. Il n’y a pas d’investissements pour parler, mais il y a des choses à pour écrire une langue: 1) les ressources matérielles 2) les enseignants qui doivent être formés 3) autres choses nécessaires au développement d’une langue.

2. Qu’est-ce qu’on va écrire?
Si l’écrit remplacerait l’oral, on doit tout écrire. Avec la langue, on exprime tout ce qu’on est, une langue écrite doit tout dire. Une langue écrite est un instruement, si elle ne sert à rien, elle ne vaut pas l’investissement de l’écrire.

3. Qu’est-ce que c’est qu’une langue écrite?
Aux écoles camerounaises, les maître enseignent une façon de lire et écrire. Il y a d’autres qui parlent le Français différemment. Tous ceux qui parlent le Français ne viennent pas du même endroit; la région n’a rien à voir avec la langue. La langue ne supprime pas l’origine de chacun. On adopte donc une façon d’écrire, même s’il y des variétés.

Dr. Sadembouo a donné la parole à l’auditoire pour qu’ils puissent décrire qui ils sont. Est-ce qu’ils sont distincts ou une grande famille? Qu’est-ce qu’ils veulent faire en tant que grande famille? Là qu’il avait fini de décrire ce que c’est qu’une langue et parler d’une manière générale, c’était le temps de revenir à la langue spécifique qui leur concerne.

Les interventions de l’auditoire:
- Un exemple est donné d’un homme qui est marié avec plusieurs femmes. Si la majorité des femmes parlent Fufuldé, les autres langues peuvent se perdre dans la majorité (il y aurait une assimilation des langues) Si les Gemjeks ne nient pas eux-mêmes, les choses nécessaires pour écrire une langue ne sont riens.
- Le Gemjek-même a plusieurs dialectes - ils cherchent une langue qui servira à toute la population Gemjek - l’essentiel qui puisse les unir.
- Il a déjà bien réfléchi et croit que c’est nécessaire que sa langue soit écrite. Il veut permettre une communauté entre tous les enfants Gemjeks - il vise l’avenir
- Le président du comité a noté que le Gemjek est une fondation à part entière. Il y a un peuple Gemjek. Lui aussi il a réfléchi et il y aura une grande perte sans la langue écrite.
- Le traducteur lui-même intervient - il y a des diversités parmi le peuple Gemjek, mais, à titre général, il y a une langue et un peuple Gemjek
- Des différences culturelles ont été notées:
  - la fête des Taureaux est différent chez les Gemjeks que chez les peuples voisins (Mery, Mbuko, Matakam, Mofu, etc)
  - à la fête des récoltes il y a un chang Mayam-Mayam qui est unique au peuple Gemjek; chaque circonstance, chaque étape dans la fête à un terme unique aux Gemjeks.

M. Sadembouo a demandé: <<Quelle est l’ensemble des localités qui forment le Gemjek?>>

A. Le Gadawa et le Sherem sont d’origines Makabi et Maroua.
B. Le Gemjek est d’origine Muyange et Wangaz
C. Le Mossoro est d’origine Tchebe
D. Le Manzahauf et la Hadela sont confrères à Moloko et d’origine Waza
E. Le Geriye est d’origine Mbuko
Le Gemjek est divisé en plusieurs groupes:

Kwatawa  Dazuwa  Gurang  Hoorgwo
Gugelang  Ndzulo  Magra  Godorok
Makvor  Magarama  Dzatal  Mayaba
Katameshé  Kléméjé  Yativ  Tchbokoto
Eyok

Le Gadawa est aussi divisé en différents groupes:

Komor -Dédin  Dala-Gaduwa  Klametowèche
-Medame  Herpatak  Zlakiar
Gamasele  Kusolong  Plangerin
Gowpow  Vréjé

Les division de Sherem:
Grilgasar  Majekele  Mandere  Mogfe

Les deux grands dialectes sont le Gemjek et le Gadawa. Le Sherem, tandis qu’il est frère de Gadawa, parle le Gemjek et non le Gadawa.

Dr. Sadembouo a donc conclu que la question «Qui sommes-nous?» a été bien répondue. Il peut avoir des différences à l’intérieur d’une langue, mais deux langues aussi peuvent se ressembler.

Une langue a un vocabulaire et une grammaire. Si les grammaires sont let mêmes, les gens se comprennent (entre 2 langues)

Dr. Sadembouo a fait une exercise avec les feuilles d’arbres. Les feuilles étaient arrangées d’une certaine façon (avec leurs verts différents) Les feuilles proches les unes aux autres avaient un vert très semblable: les différences devenaient plus grandes de la première feuille à la dernière. C’est semblable aux différences entre les langues. Il a demandé aux personnes présentes de choisir une feuille pour représenter les langues Gadawa et Gemjek. Les feuilles représentant ces langues étaient très proches. Il leur demandait ensuite de choisir des feuilles pour les langues proches à la leur (Matacam, Zulgo, etc.) Le feuille qui a premièremen été choisie pour le Zulgo était proche aux feuilles choisies pour Gadawa et Gemjek.

• Il y avait une intervention - les couleurs se confondent aux yeux - les langues sont plus distinctes. Dr. Sadembouo a donc répété l’exercice avec deux bleus différents, le blanc, et les feuilles vertes encore. Les feuilles choisies pour le Gadawa et le Gemjek étaient les mêmes qu’auparavant. La couleur choisie pour Zulgo était premièremen la même feuille qu’auparavant, mais après, la couleur choisie était le blanc.

Dr. Sadembouo a posé plusieurs questions à l’auditoire:

1. Quelle variété de la langue choisira-t-on si la langue serait écrite?

Le consensus c’était le Gemjek. Il y a une bonne compréhension de Gemjek, même chez les Gadawa. Il y a plus de personnes qui parlent le Gemjek. Le Gadawa est une langue plus difficile à apprendre (à aspirer).
2. Qui utiliseront les livres écris?
   Tous les villages cités, ainsi que d’autres. La preuve c’est la popularité de la cantique Gemjek,
   acheté par plusieurs villages voisins.

3. Quelles seront les publications écris?
   Il y aura les contes, les agendas, les syllabium (de tous les niveaux), les grands livres, les
   journaux, la Bible, les concordances, la littérature chrétienne, les catéchismes, les livres de vie
   familiale, etc.

4. Qui va produire ces livres?
   Ils cherchent une famille linguiste pour leur aider - quelqu’un qui se présente au milieu d’eux. Ils
   ne peuvent pas avancer un pas seul (->intervention d’Alan Starr <<pourtant, vous avez des
   cantiques?>> Ils ont pu avoir une cantique grâce à l’aide de Beat Holler. Il leur a aidés en ce qui
   concerne l’imprimerie. Il ne leur a pas aidés avec l’écriture) Ils sont prêts à supporter tout qui leur
   est présenté.

Dr. Sadembouo a parlé de la part d’ANAACLAC. L’ANAACLAC n’a pas les ressources pour leur
donner ce qu’ils demandent parce qu’elle n’a pas de linguistes. Le représentant de l’Extrême Nord
au bureau d’ANAACLAC est Mata mais n’est pas linguiste. Dr. Sadembouo est élu comme conseiller
technique et ne peut pas quitter sa position. Ce qu’ANAACLAC demande souvent c’est que les gens
trouvent un linguiste parmi eux. Ils seront formés à différents stages et niveaux. Le plus haut niveau
de formation c’est assistant-linguiste. Les personnes choisies doivent avoir un niveau d’éducation
conforme à la Bac. Les personnes qualifiées peuvent aller aux stages et aider le travail en tant que
linguistes. Un linguiste de Maroua pourrait peut-être leur aider.

Dr. Sadembouo posait ensuite d’autres questions:

1. Est-ce que votre langue est en train d’être envahi par d’autres langues?
   Oui, surtout par le Fulfuldé, que tous puissent parler. Seulement ceux qui sont allées à l’école
   comprennent le Français. Les femmes d’origine Zulgo (qui parlent d’ailleurs le Gemjek maintenant)
et les évangélistes dans la région Zulgo parlent le Zulgo. Les évangélistes ont, par contre, surtout
   travillé en utilisant le Fulfuldé.

2. Quand vous êtes avec des Zulgos, comment est-ce que vous communiquez?
   Pour les grades campagnes d’évangélisation, ils utilisent des interprètes, sauf si le Fulfuldé est
   parlé.

   M. Starr a parlé de la part de la SIL. Il a encore une fois donner ses remerciements. Il a expliqué
   que la SIL a un personnel limité. La SIL travail avec ANACLAC et veut plus travailler avec les
   associations qui développent les langues.

   La SIL a déjà fait de la formation en alphabétisation, la formation linguistique viendrait. Il ne
   faut pas que le comité attende quelqu’un qui vient leur aider. Le peu de gens disponibles essayera
d’aider, avec l’aide du Seigneur.

Dr. Sadembouo a fait ressorti le point qu’un comité de traduction et un comité de langue sont
deux choses différentes. Le comité de traduction s’intéressait plutôt à la Bible - il se composait des
chrétiens. Un comité de langue existe pour tous. Un comité de langue doit être formé. Ce comité
deviendrait membre d’ANAACLAC pour pouvoir faire parti des comités de langue partout au
Cameroun. Le comité de langues produirait des livres non-chrétiens et accepte ceux qui ne sont pas comme membres.

Dr. Sadembouo a expliqué qu’une famille se comprend entre eux, même si les langues sont différents.

L’auditoire a dit que les Zulgos et les Gemjeks ne se comprennent pas.
S’il y d’autre travail à s’effectuer, le bureau à Maroua les signalerait.

Dr. Sadembouo et M. Starr ont laissé leur addresses.
References


