A Summary Report of a Sociolinguistic Survey of the Kulere Dialects of Plateau and Nassarawa States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This report presents a sociolinguistic survey conducted in the Kulere speech communities of Bokkos LGA, Plateau State and Wamba LGA, Nassarawa State, Nigeria. The purpose of the survey is to identify a potential reference dialect for the development of Kulere. Through the use of group, church and school interviews and using participatory methods, the researchers collected data concerning: reported levels of dialect intercomprehension; language use in various domains both public and private; language attitudes towards the dialects; reported levels of bilingualism in various languages; as well as data on education and literacy levels. While the elicitation and comparison of wordlists was used in determining the extent of shared vocabulary between the dialects, the administration of dialect intelligibility testing provided insights into the levels of dialect inherent intelligibility. Our findings show that considering relevant linguistic and sociolinguistic factors, the Toff dialect could be developed to serve all the Kulere speaking people.
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1. Introduction

This report concerns a sociolinguistic survey carried out in the Kulere speech communities of Bokkos and Wamba Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau and Nassarawa States respectively. The fieldwork was conducted from November 9 to December 2, 2011 by John Muniru, Carol Magnusson, Marcus Hansley, Samuel Ayenajeh, Uche Samuel and Grace Ajaegbu who are language surveyors with Language Development Facilitators, Jos. Precisely, we (the surveyors) visited thirteen places in all (eleven of which are in Plateau State, the two others are in Nassarawa State). The strategy was to visit at least two different places in each of the five dialect areas. We visited Dashid, Tamoso and Yeﬀ for the Ambul dialect, Kamwai and Tukye for the Kamwai dialect, Marhai and Massenge for the Marhai-Massenge dialect, Anacha, Diggot and Richa for the Richa dialect and Kwarka, Toff and Tudu and for the Toff dialect. See Table 1-1 below.

For the many people who contributed to the success of this survey we express our gratitude. These people include Mr Iliya Amagon, the immediate past Chairman of Bokkos LGA, the district heads and chiefs of all the villages visited, the authorities of the churches and schools visited, Mr. Akila Mandue, Mr Andrew Azzuwut, and Mr Benjamin Ayuba.

Table 1-1 Map showing the Kulere-speaking communities
1.1. Background information

Andrew Azzuwut who is Kulere by birth has begun to translate portions of Scripture into Kulere and has started a Kulere-English dictionary on his own initiative. He has also been coordinating a group of individuals from the area for the same purpose. He approached one of the officials of the Nigeria Bible Translation Trust (NBTT) for assistance in developing the language. In response to Mr. Azzuwut’s request, NBTT requested Language Development Facilitators to do a survey of the said area with a view of gathering information that could lead to the commencement of a language development programme in Kulere. NBTT’s most important goal of the survey was to find out which of the five dialects of Kulere could be used as a basis for the development of the Kulere language and would best serve all the people.

1.2. Purpose, goals and research questions

The purpose of the survey was to determine a reference dialect for a language development programme in Kulere. To fulfill this purpose, the following goals were set:
1. Determine the extent of linguistic relationships between the Kulere dialects spoken in Bokkos and Wamba LGAs of Plateau and Nassarawa States respectively.
2. Assess the sociolinguistic relationships between all the five Kulere dialects.
3. Evaluate the interest of the Kulere people and the Kulere churches for scripture translation into their language.
4. Evaluate the vitality of Kulere within the area.

Based on the aforementioned goals, we aimed to answer the following research questions:
1. What is the extent of linguistic similarity between the Kulere dialects?
2. Do the speakers of the Kulere dialects understand each others’ dialects?
3. How do the Kulere people perceive the groupings of their dialects?
4. What is the nature and extent of interactions between and within the Kulere dialects?
5. Do the Kulere people and the church denominations working among them have interest in the translation of scripture into Kulere?
6. Would Kulere continue to be spoken by future generations?

1.3. Research Instruments

We used interviews, the participatory method, word and phrase lists, recorded text testing (RTT) and observation for the data-gathering exercises.

Interviews, participatory methods and observations were used to gather data concerning reported levels of inter-dialect comprehension, language use in various domains, attitudes towards the dialects and the languages of wider communication, and levels of bilingualism, as well as literacy levels. A 370-item wordlist and a 20-item phrase list were elicited in all the dialect areas. The word and phrase lists were compared to determine the extent of lexical similarity and basic word order between the dialects. The preparation and administration of Recorded Text Testing (RTT) was carried out in each dialect area to gain insights into the level of dialect inherent intelligibility.

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1 A full explanation on the research instruments and methodology is provided in the full report.
2 Interviews are conducted with the groups, church(es) and school in each village.
1.4. Language classification

Keir Hansford, et al (1976:114) and David Crozier and Roger Blench (1992:72) provide the following linguistic classification for Kulere:

Afro-Asiatic, Chadic, Western Chadic sub-branch A, Ron Group, Southern.

The *Ethnologue* lists Kulere as [ISO 639-3 identifier: kul].

1.5. Previous research

In 1966 Paul Dancy and Dick Bergman carried out a survey of the Kulere people. In their unpublished brief survey report titled *Kulere*, among other things, they identified two dialects of Kulere, namely Toff-Richa-Ambul and Kamwai. They reported that “Men and younger people speak Hausa. The older men and women and perhaps half the women speak little or no Hausa. Hausa is never used in the home. No literature.” Other information in the report is demographic, missiological and cultural information. Dancy and Bergman also elicit a list of 100 words and some phrases in the language based on Swaddesh 100 word wordlist.

A well-documented linguistic research on Kulere is in Herrmann Jungraithmayr’s *Die Ron Sprache* published in 1970 as part of studies in Chadic-Hamitic languages of Northern Nigeria. In this work, Jungraithmayr presents a comprehensive study on the morphology of Kulere (pp 295-356), detailing parts of speech, word-formation processes, a mini-dictionary and a wordlist. He states that his main informant was from the Toff area. The mini-dictionary, according to Jungraithmayr is based on Toff, Ambul and Richa dialects.

Hansford, et al (1976:114) list Kulere in their first edition of *Index of Nigerian Languages*, adding that Toff and Korom Boye are the alternative names of the language. In the second edition, edited by Crozier and Blench (1992:72), an update to the earlier record is made. “Akande,” “Akandi” and “Kandi” are reported to be the people’s own name for their language in the villages of Kamwai, Toff and Richa. Crozier and Blench also identify Toff, Richa and Kamwai-Marhai as the dialects of the language, naming each dialect after the major villages where each dialect is spoken.

In an attempt to reconstruct the proto-Ron, Blench (2001) carries out a comparison of lists of words from Ron languages including Kulere.

The Kulere have also been a subject of continous ethnographic studies by Barbara Frank. This led to her 1981 monograph, *Die Kulere*. See also Frank 1976, 1981a, 1982, 1990. Other ethnographic references are: Temple (1922), Meek (1925), Ames (1934), Gun (1953), and Mohr (1960). CAPRO (n.d.) summarises past research on the Kulere people and their present situation.

2. Sociolinguistic Identification

2.1. Kulere people and language

When asked to trace their history, almost all the people said that according to their ancestors they migrated from Bauchi to their present settlements. Some also said that the Kulere’s initial place of abode was in Cross River State before they moved to Bauchi. However in Dashid they claimed that all the Kulere are from Babylon and did not settle in any other place save their present location.

People in all villages preferred outsiders to call their language and themselves Kulere, though people at Kwarka and Massenge mentioned “Akandi” as alternative name of the people while people said “Akaya”. They identified five dialects of the Kulere language: Toff,
Ambul, Richa, Kamwai and Marhai-Massenge\(^3\). Speakers of these dialects appear to believe in one common identity, they said they are one people speaking the same language, Kulere.

According to the Ethnologue, the estimated population of the Kulere people was 15,600 in 1991. Based on the 2006 census annual estimated growth percentage of 2.7% in Plateau state; we estimate the population in 2012 to be around 29,000 people. This is a conservative estimate compared to the estimate of 36,000 based on combining group interview responses.

2.2. Kulere geographical area

Kulere communities are located along the south-western escarpment of the Jos plateau. The landscape is made up of steep hills and rocky outcrops, with numerous streams and rivers flowing in the valleys between.

2.3. Neighbouring languages

Ron [cla], Maboh-Barkul\(^4\) [mae] and Horom [hoe] are the closest neighbouring languages to the Kulere area. Others include Sha [scw], Fulfulde [fuv], Kantana [mma], Mwaghavul [sur] and Mushere [cky]. One group also mentioned a language called Yomba. We have not found any other reference to this language. Perhaps it is a village name. Ron and other languages including Kulere constitute a group (Ron Group) under West Chadic. Bo-Rukul and Horom are Plateau languages (Jungraithmayr 1970 and Williamson 1971). Reportedly, speakers of Maboh-Barkul and Horom regard themselves as part of the Kulere both socially and politically, but do admit that they speak different languages. The Kulere reported that Maboh-Barkul and Horom people are fluent speakers of Kulere, but the Kulere do not understand either of those two languages.

Based on survey work we did in Maboh-Barkul and Horom languages in June 2012, we learn that overall their attitude towards the Kulere people may be positive. Especially since the two peoples intermarry with the Kulere. However, the peoples’ attitudes toward Kulere language does vary, some having a positive attitude towards the Kulere, other neutral, and some have a somewhat negative attitude towards it. Similar patterns of responses were expressed on becoming literate in Kulere. RTT results show that the scores on the story in Toff dialect of Kulere for Bo-Rukul and Horom speakers was between 57% - 72% with older people having the highest test scores. This shows that there is not a high comprehension of Kulere by Maboh-Barkul and Horom speakers. This will be described more fully in a separate report, not yet published.

\(^3\) Massenge is variously spelt e.g. Massange, Masinge and Massinge. But it is pronounced [mosi’ge].
\(^4\) Maboh-Barkul is also known as Bo-Rukul, using the roots of the two names.
Table 2-1: Map of the Kulere language area and neighbouring languages

2.4. Lexical similarity between Kulere dialects

From the lexicostatistic percentages shown in Table 2-2 below, we can learn the following:

- The Toff, Ambul and Richa dialects are more lexically similar to each other than to the other dialects.
- The Marhai-Massenge dialect is more lexically similar to the Ambul dialect than to any of the other dialects.
- The Kamwai dialect is the most lexically different.
### Table 2-2 Lexical similarity percentages between Kulere dialects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village name</th>
<th>Tukye</th>
<th>Marhai-Massenge</th>
<th>Ambul</th>
<th>Toff</th>
<th>Dashid</th>
<th>Toff</th>
<th>Kwarka</th>
<th>Richa</th>
<th>Diggot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamwai</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwai</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwai</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.5. Social setting

#### 2.5.1. Government units

The Toff, Ambul, Richa and Kamwai dialect areas fall within Bokkos LGA of Plateau State, while the Marhai-Massenge dialect area is in Wamba LGA of Nassarawa State.

The Toff and Ambul communities are in Toff District, while the Richa and Kamwai villages are in separate districts officially known as Richa District and Kamwai District. The head of each district reports to the Paramount Ruler of Ron-land and the Chairman of Bokkos LGA’s Traditional Council, Bokkos. The chiefs of Marhai and Massenge villages report to the head of Mama District.

#### 2.5.2. Local community development associations (CDAs)

Each village we visited has its own community development association (CDA), and also belongs to its dialect group’s or political district’s CDA. In addition, all the villages are also part of the larger Kulere CDA which meets at Siken, the central meeting place of all the Kulere people and also the seat of the proposed Kulere LGA. The Kulere communities in Nassarawa State are yet to have a combined CDA, but are currently working on setting one up.

#### 2.5.3. Markets

Notable markets around the area include the Daffo, Bokkos, Toff, Richa and Wamba markets. Most people (especially the Kulere in Plateau State) reported that they often shop at the Daffo market (a Ron town) and Richa, while the Marhai and Massenge villages frequently attend the Wamba market.

#### 2.5.4. Inter-marriage

A large percentage of the spouses of the Kulere people were reported to come from within their own dialect area. All the groups interviewed also responded that they marry from other Kulere dialect groups and other neighbouring language/ethnic groups. But the number of these spouses was said to be minute. The only exception to this is the report from Massenge where it was mentioned that about half of their wives are non-Kulere.

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5 Dialect name
6 Village name
2.5.5. Festivals

People in most of the villages reported that they hold the harvest-of-crops celebration. On the 26th December of each year all Kulere descendants usually converge at Siken to celebrate their unique culture as a people and to discuss issues affecting the development of their communities.

2.5.6. Church network

Within the Kulere-speaking area of Plateau State, the dominant church is the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) which has at least one parish in all the villages visited, and its regional church council headquarters is situated at Richa. In addition, there is a local church council headquarters of the church in each of the four dialect areas. The Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ (ERCC) is the largest church working among the Kulere communities of Nassarawa State. Other churches in the area are Christ Apostolic, Roman Catholic, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Seventh-Day Adventist and Deeper Life.

2.5.7. Schools

All villages visited have a primary school (PS). Toff, Richa, Kamwai, Marhai and Massenge villages have a secondary school (SS). Most of these schools are government-owned, except the SS in Diggot and a nursery and PS in Tukye which are reportedly owned by private individuals. Students from Kwarka, Tamoso and Dashid villages attend the SS at Toff, while Tukye students were said to go to Kamwai for junior SS. Few Tukye students were reported to go Massenge for senior SS education.

3. Intelligibility

3.1. Reported comprehension

According to the people, they understand each other’s dialects. But their reported level of comprehension varies from one dialect to another. The Toff dialect is reported to be the most understood by people from all the dialects, followed by Richa, Ambul, Kamwai and Marhai-Massenge dialects.

3.2. Tested comprehension

Table 3-1: Result of recorded text testing of inherent intelligibility between Kulere dialects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stories from dialect (village in parenthesis)</th>
<th>Toff (Tabui)</th>
<th>Ambul (Tamoso)</th>
<th>Richa (Richa)</th>
<th>Kamwai (Kamwai)</th>
<th>Marhai-Massenge (Marhai)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toff (Kwarka)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambul (Dashid)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richa (Diggot)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwai (Tukye)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai-Massenge (Massenge)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Percentage in light grayscale is below the threshold set for judging inherent intelligibility.
From Table 3-1 we can learn different things about the inherent intelligibility between the speakers of the different dialects:

- No non-Kamwai subjects could understand Kamwai without prior learning.
- Speakers of the Marhai-Massenge dialect could not understand the Richa, Ambul or Kamwai dialects.
- Speakers of the Kamwai dialect were likely not to understand the Toff or Ambul dialects.

4. Language Acceptability

4.1. Dialect choice for development

We asked the question: “Which variety [of Kulere] should be used as the one for writing, recording, or films so that all the others [Kulere] will understand it well?” In response, the people of many villages chose their own dialect as their first choice for development. However, the people in Kamwai, Tukye, Tamos and Massenge villages chose Toff as their first choice. In Marhai, Anacha and Diggot villages they chose Toff as their second choice (see Table 4-1 for details). Interestingly, all also affirmed their willingness to read and write in any other dialects of Kulere as well as from their own. We note that people in Dashid said they preferred the Kamwai dialect, and in contrast to all the other groups placed Toff as their last choice for development. This is especially surprising because the results of the wordlist and recorded text testing show that they comprehend Toff much better than Kamwai.

It seems that people in Kamwai and Marhai-Massenge realize that their dialect is not central and it would potentially be better for all Kulere speakers to develop Toff or Ambul dialect over their own. We note that Toff dialect was rated highest by the people as easiest to speak and the most widely understood.

*Table 4-1 People’s dialect choice for development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialect</th>
<th>Where participatory method was conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toff</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambul</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richa</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwai</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhai-Massenge</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Attitudes toward Kulere dialects

As mentioned earlier, respondents in all the villages visited affirmed all the dialects of Kulere as being one and same language. Speakers of the Toff, Ambul and Richa dialects appear to be more comfortable with each other’s dialects than with the two others. While the Kamwai speakers see Toff as prestigious, Marhai-Massenge speakers seem to see the value of developing the Toff dialect over their own for the benefit of all Kulere speakers.

People in more than half of the villages visited acknowledged Toff village as the place where the best Kulere is spoken, adding that the variety of Kulere spoken there is free from adulteration.

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8 We conducted the participatory method exercises in Anacha for the Richa dialect.
5. Bilingualism and Language Use

5.1. Other languages spoken by the Kulere

Kulere people use Hausa often in many domains. We observed that people from all age-groups in all the villages visited used Hausa. Richa, Diggot, Marhai and Massenge villages appear to have the highest percentage of people who use Hausa. English is the official language of instruction in schools so is learnt by children and youths; also middle-aged people who have been to school have learnt it. There are several other languages spoken by a few of the Kulere people, including Ron, Fulfulde, Kantana, Yomba, Mushere, Maboh-Barkul and Mwaghavul.

5.2. People’s perceived bilingual proficiency of age-groups

It was reported in most of the villages visited that all people of all ages and both genders use Kulere very well all the time. They use it more than any other language. Except in Richa they say that they use Hausa as much as they use Kulere. In about half the villages visited they say that most people use Hausa well most of the time. It was reported that people in all of the villages visited can speak some English to some degree. The youths and middle-aged men, however, speak English more than other age-groups.

5.3. Where people learn Hausa and English

Children start acquiring Hausa and English between the ages of two to seven. People said they learn it at school from teachers, friends and playmates; at home from parents; at the market; and at church.

6. Language vitality

6.1. Children’s proficiency in Kulere

It was reported in most places that all children speak Kulere fluently. But, in the view of the respondents in Toff, Tamoso and Dashid, children in their villages are not fluent in Kulere. Also, people said Kulere is the language children use more than other languages. We did observe children who used Kulere in all of the villages visited.

6.2. Domains of language use

Responses from the PM exercises (on domain of language use); the church interviews; and school interviews show that Kulere is the primary language in many informal domains in the villages, especially at home, at the farm, for courting, for scolding children and for greetings. Hausa is dominant in the churches, while English is most commonly used in the schools.

6.3. Peoples’ perceptions of the vitality of their own language

People in all villages visited acknowledged that the youth code-mix Hausa and or English with Kulere, but this is not approved of. Most of the people interviewed held that such acts of mixing languages by the youth are detrimental to the maintenance of the Kulere language. However in Richa they said it can be good or bad depending on the topic of discussion.

Furthermore, people in all the villages visited expressed optimism that their children and great grandchildren will continue to speak Kulere as their primary language. Also they claimed that they would feel bad if the unborn generations refuse to use Kulere.
6.4. Peoples’ attitudes towards their own language

The people’s attitude towards their own language appears to be positive and strong. To them Kulere is their inheritance and identity; it is the most useful language within the area; it is as good as English; and it is good to speak especially to keep secrets from neighbours. Though in all the villages visited people said Kulere is superior to other languages, the people in Marhai said Kulere is on the same level as other languages.

6.5. Peoples’ attitudes towards languages of wider communication

The attitude of the people interviewed towards Hausa and English can be said to be positive.

People in most of the villages visited reported that parents are happy to see their children use Hausa especially for communicating with non-Kulere folk.

In all of the villages visited people said that they would like their children to use English because it is the official language and it may help them find work in the future. They all reported that teachers should use English in school because it is a “general” and an official language. They said that sometimes it is permissible for a teacher to use Hausa or Kulere to explain things students may not understand in English.

People in Tamoso, Richa and Marhai said that they are not passionate about using Hausa or English instead of Kulere. At the other seven villages visited people indicated that they have a moderate desire to use Hausa or English more than Kulere.

6.6. Vitality rating of Kulere on Extended Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

Determining factors:
1. Functions – There is extensive oral use in the domains of the home and the farm. Some people code-switch and code-mix with Hausa.
2. Acquisition – Most members of the child-bearing generation transmit the language to their children in homes.
3. Motivation – Some members of the child-bearing generation (youth and middle-aged) feel it’s beneficial to speak their language for some purposes, but feel it’s more beneficial to shift to LWC.
4. Environment – Official policy affirms the language being used orally, but maintains its oral status.
5. Diglossia – Some members of the child-bearing generations use their language for specific traditionally reserved purposes. Others use Hausa for many of the same purposes. For the most part there seems to be a mutual understanding among the people as to when to speak the language and when to use Hausa.

Considering the available data, Kulere may be judged to be ‘6a’ on EGIDS’s scale which is described as ‘Vigorous sustainable orality’.

7. Literacy

7.1. Perceived number of literates in Hausa, English and Kulere

In most of the villages visited people reported that most of the youths and middle-aged men can read and write in Hausa and English. But in Massenge and Kwarka they reported that few youths were literate.
While people in all villages visited claimed that at least a few old men are literate in Hausa, in five out of nine villages (where questions on literacy were asked) only a few old men are said to be literate in English. Only a few old women in half of the villages visited are reported to be literate in Hausa, and a very few in two villages are literate in English. In six of the villages visited a few children were reported to be literate in Hausa and in three villages most of the children were reported to be literate in English.

In five out of the nine villages where the question was asked the people claimed that at least a few people could read and write in Kulere.

7.2. Perceived literacy proficiency in LWCs and other languages

It was reported that men and youths in all the villages visited can read and write in Hausa and English to some extent ranging from very well to fairly well. Old men in most of the villages are said to read and write well primarily in Hausa. Old women do not read or write well in any language, except in Tukye where they read and write well in Hausa. For the most part, young and middle-aged women in all the villages visited can read and write well in Hausa and English. The people said that children in all of the villages visited can read and write in Hausa and English with varying ability ranging from well to not very well.

8. Project Support

8.1. Desirability of scriptures in Kulere

Both the people and the church leaders interviewed concurred that translation of the Holy Scriptures into Kulere is necessary. They believed that the translation would aid their comprehension of the scriptures.

8.2. Support for scripture translation and literacy projects

Based on reports from the people, and the authorities of the churches and schools, there is a likelihood that they would support translation of the Holy Scriptures into Kulere and a literacy project in the language.

As supporting evidence the people pointed to community development projects which they had initiated, financed and managed. Such projects include fixing roads, constructing of culverts and building bridges, schools, churches and health centres. We saw most of these projects in fairly good condition. There were also ongoing, uncompleted and abandoned projects in the area.

Though each village seems to work with the closest neighbouring village(s), they also work with other Kulere villages on matters affecting the entire Kulere-speaking area, for example, they are working on the creation of the proposed Kulere LGA.

Demonstrating their potential support, the people mentioned that they would be willing to contribute to translation and literacy projects by providing food, money and accommodation, and also by praying and encouraging. In addition they provided names of people in their villages who can actively help in the projects either as translators or as literacy workers.

Likewise, the authorities of the primary schools promised to release their schools’ facilities such as classrooms and chalkboards in support of a Kulere literacy project.

Responding in the same vein, the clergymen of COCIN and ERCC said that their churches would support the translation project in the language financially and prayerfully.
They added that they would be willing to work in collaboration with other denominations in the area to ensure the projects are successful.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Toff, Ambul, Richa, Kamwai and Marhai-Massenge are the five dialects that make up the Kulere language. This division is based on the people’s perception, the results of our wordlists comparison and recorded text testing.

Speakers of these dialects see themselves as one people, speaking the same language, Kulere. Despite being divided by geo-political boundaries and the edge of the Plateau, they reported that they meet annually at Siken town (headquarters of the Kulere area) to celebrate their culture as a people and to discuss issues affecting the development of their communities.

The Kulere language currently appears to have strong ethnolinguistic vitality (6a on the EGIDS scale). It is the primary language used by people of all age categories in most informal domains and the people seem to have a positive attitude towards their language. However, Hausa code-mixing and or code-switching is noticeable especially among the youth and middle-aged men.

Both the people and the church leaders in the area are interested in the translation of the Bible into Kulere. They agree that Holy Scriptures in Kulere would help the Kulere people to understand the God’s Word better. They said financial, material, prayer and moral support for the translation project could be expected from all of them.

Concerning the dialect that could be used as a basis for the development of the Kulere language, we, the surveyors, recommend that the Toff dialect could potentially serve all the Kulere speakers well. Some of the reasons are that the Toff dialect was rated highest by the people as easiest to speak and the most widely understood. It was also preferred as the most suitable for literacy; even the speakers of Kamwai and Marhai-Massenge chose the Toff dialect above their own. The Toff, Ambul and Richa dialects are found to have the highest lexical similarity. Speakers of all the other dialects scored between 74% and 83% in the Toff RTT story, which is acceptable. The lowest RTT score, which was from Kamwai subjects, was just slightly below our 75% benchmark for inherent intelligibility. We also note that the second lowest score of 76% was from Marhai-Massenge subjects. Granted that linguistically Ambul and Richa dialects appear relatively suitable for development, they seem not as prestigious to the majority of the people. Though most of the RTT scores were higher on Richa story, it is unlikely to be understood by Marhai speakers (which scored 58% in its story). To most of the people we interviewed, Toff is the most prestigious dialect and Toff village is regarded as the place where the best Kulere is spoken.
10. Bibliography


