A sociolinguistic survey of the Gbe language communities of Benin and Togo
Volume 5
Xwla language area

Bonnie J. Henson
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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY OF THE GBE LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

OF

BENIN AND TOGO

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Abstract

This paper presents a sociolinguistic survey conducted in the Xwla language communities (Kwa language family) of Benin. The Gbe languages continuum is situated in the southeastern part of West Africa. Expanding westwards from southwestern Nigeria, the Gbe communities occupy large areas in southern Benin, Togo, and southeastern Ghana. To date in Benin, as far as Gbe varieties are concerned, Aja, Fon, Gen, and Gun have undergone language development on a larger scale. A survey of the Xwla communities was conducted to assess whether and to what extent existing literature and literacy efforts in Fon, Gen, and Gun could extend to the Xwla communities and to determine the nature and extent of SIL’s possible involvement among these communities.

After a general overview of the taxonomic and geographic language situation, test results are reported. Survey interview and group test results are presented on comprehension of Fon, Gen, and Gun. Results are given on language attitudes toward both written and oral forms of Fon, Gen, and Gun and toward the development of Xwla. In addition, the following topics were investigated: language vitality and the relationship of Xwla to related Gbe varieties in terms of comprehension and language attitudes. Also, information by local leaders on the literacy and religious situations and on migration history is given.

The group comprehension test results show, at least preliminarily, that the Xwla have a high comprehension of Fon, Gen, and Gun. Though the preference everywhere is for literacy in Xwla, literacy programs in either Gen or Gun are acceptable to most people. Therefore, Gen and Gun literacy (Gen to the west and Gun to the east of the Xwla language area) appears to be a workable solution for literacy needs in the Xwla speech communities provided that there is adequate institutional support. Regarding Xwla language vitality, there are no indications of language shift.

1. Introduction

This paper reports on a sociolinguistic survey conducted in the Xwla speech communities of Benin. The Xwla speech variety belongs to the Gbe language continuum (Kwa language group) which is situated in the southeastern part of West Africa. Expanding westwards from southwestern Nigeria, the Gbe communities occupy large areas in southern Benin, Togo, and southeastern Ghana.

Among the Gbe varieties, five have thus far undergone language development on a larger scale: Fon, Gen, and Gun in Benin, and Ewe in Togo. To assess whether and to what extent existing literature and literacy efforts in these Gbe speech varieties could extend to the remaining Gbe communities, or whether additional language-based development programs in some of the remaining communities would be beneficial and to determine the nature and extent of SIL’s possible involvement among these communities, a sociolinguistic study of the Gbe communities of Benin and Togo was launched in the late 1980s.

The sociolinguistics survey reported here is part of this larger study and was carried out in November and December 1998 by B. J. Henson, E. C. Johnson, and A. Kluge, SIL researchers. The survey data reported here results from community interviews administered in the villages of Avlo-Plage, Coho, Glégbonou, Kétou and Onkouihoué, and the neighborhood Houalacomey of the town of Godomè, as well as three Rapid Appraisal Recorded Text Tests (RA-RTTs) in Fon, Gen, and Gun administered in five of these locations.¹

¹Not all RA-RTTs were administered in all locations.
In Section 2, pertinent background information on the Xwla speech variety is presented. Some of these data were gathered during the field interviews with members of the Xwla language community. This section is followed by information on previous linguistic research (Section 3), a presentation of the research questions (Section 4) and a description of the methodology as applied during this survey (Section 5). In Section 6, the findings are discussed, followed by a summary and conclusions in Section 7. The report closes with a set of appendices and a list of references.

2. **Background**

2.1. **Language name and classification**

The *Ethnologue* (Grimes 1996:169) gives the following classification for Xwla:

- Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Kwa, Left Bank, Gbe, Aja

Alternative names:

- Phla (Grimes 1996:169)
- Offra, Ophra, Houla, Kpla, Pla, Popo (Capo 1986:12)
- Xwla (Pazzi 1979:17)

However, in contrast to what is reported in the *Ethnologue*, there is no evidence that Xwla should be grouped with Aja, much less considered to be a dialect or daughter language. (See Tompkins et al. 1997.)

In *Renaissance du gbe* (1986:99ff, Carte 1b) Capo classifies a number of Gbe lects into five groupings based on phonological and morpho-phonological characteristics. He classifies Xwla within the Phla-Phera group, which also includes Alada, Ayizo, Gbési, Kotafon, Saxwe, Se, Tofin, Toli, and Xwela.

2.2. **Language area**

Xwla language communities stretch along the coast of Benin, across the Mono, Atlantique, and Ouémé départements.

According to information received during the survey, there are two distinct areas where Xwla is spoken. One is located in western Benin, primarily in the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo (Mono département), but extends slightly into Togo to the west and to the east, into the sous-préfecture of...
Ouidah (Atlantique département). The other is located in eastern Benin, primarily around the eastern shores of Lake Nokoué, in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji (Ouémé département), though there are some Xwla-speaking communities along the western shores of the lake as well, in the sous-préfecture of Abomey-Calavi (Atlantique département). Historically, there were Xwla villages all along the coast connecting these two regions, but reportedly, these villages are now mostly inhabited by Fon speakers. A few villages remain predominantly Xwla-speaking though, among them two communities located in the district of Cotonou, Plakodji-Plage, and Enagnon. (For a map of the area, see Appendix A)

There are some discrepancies in information obtained during the survey versus that in previously published sociolinguistic research:

- The *Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin* (CNL du Bénin 1983:65) lists Djérègbé and Tohouè as being Xwla-speaking, but informants in Tohouè reported that they speak Défi.\(^7\) Djérègbé is reportedly a mix of Défi and Gun speakers.

- Also, the *Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin* (CNL du Bénin 1983) lists as Xwla-speaking two villages in the sous-préfecture of Abomey-Calavi, Houalacomey, and Avlékétékondji. However, elders interviewed in Houalacomey stated that Avlékétékondji is the Fon name for their community.

### 2.3. Population

During the 1992 Benin Census, population data was elicited giving totals both by ethnic group as well as by political community. The total by ethnic group results in a Xwla population figure of 61,630\(^8\) (Ministère du Plan 1994a:46).

Using the figures given for political communities, the towns reported to be mostly populated by Xwla speakers have a combined population of 65,679. However, this also includes towns and villages with a reportedly mixed population. Therefore, the total number of Xwla speakers could conceivably be lower (Ministère du Plan 1994b:15, 25; 1994c:15–16; 1994d:27–28; see Appendix B.)

Thus, it can be concluded that the total Xwla population is between 60,000 and 65,000.

### 2.4. History of migration

Pazzi (1979:17) considers Xwla to be one of four ancient Aja-Tado dialects,\(^9\) along with Ewe, Aja, and Ayizo.\(^10\) He speculates that these four were already quite different at the beginning of “the modern era” (presumably the advent of European contact in the 15\(^{th}\) century).

The elders of Kétonou and Onkouihoué agreed that the Xwla people are originally from Tado (or “Aja-Tado”). The people of Coho stated that their ancestors had lived in Agbanakin, Togo, before moving to

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\(^7\)Not listed by CENALA (1990), the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 1996) or Capo (1986).

\(^8\)It is noted here that, during the census, individuals were asked to which ethnic group they belong and not which language they speak as their first language. Thus, interviewees identified with their father’s ethnic group, even though they might neither speak his language nor live in his language area.

\(^9\)Tado is located in today’s préfecture of Notsé in Togo.

\(^10\)Pazzi (1979) refers to Aja as Ajá, Ewe as Evè, and Xwla as Xwlà.
Coho. The elders of Houalacomey reported that the founders of their community moved to the Abomey-Calavi area from Xwla-Djekin, near Grand-Popo. The Xwla people now living in the eastern region of Benin, in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, reported that they had moved there from the west, from Grand-Popo and Agbanakin.

2.5. Presence of other ethnic groups

In the western Xwla language area, Xwla villages are interspersed with Ayizo, Gen, Fon, Waci, and Xwela villages. There are also speakers of Anglo and Keta, both dialects of Ewe, living in the western coastal villages. There is a strong local presence of Waci to the north, Gen to the west, and Xwela and Fon to the east.

In the eastern Xwla language area, Xwla villages are surrounded by Fon villages to the west, Gun villages to the north and Défi villages to the east. There are also Toli and Tofin speakers present in the region.

None of the Xwla villages visited are isolated from contact with other ethnic groups. While most of the villages surveyed claimed to be monolingual, mixed marriages are common, with no apparent restriction as to ethnic group. The majority of Xwla men marry Xwla women, but interviewees also reported marriages between Xwla speakers and speakers of Défi, Fon, Gen, Gun, Hausa, Keta, Kotafon, Toli, Waci, Xwela, and Yoruba. The communities of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué stated that most of the mixed marriages in their area are with the Gen, but the other communities said that there was no ethnic group represented more than the others.

2.6. Regional language use

Although Xwla is reportedly the language most often used in Xwla villages, this is not the case for the regions in which the Xwla people live. In the west, the people of Avlo-Plage, Coho, and Onkouihoué reported that Gen is the most widely used language in their region. The elders of Houalacomey stated that Fon is the dominant language for their area, which given their location in the greater metropolitan area of Cotonou is only to be expected. Those interviewed in Glégbonou and Kétonou, in the eastern Xwla language area, stated that Gun is the language most widely used in their region.

French is the language of the Beninese educational system. Fon, Gen, and Gun are currently used for non-formal education, Fon in south-central Benin, Gen in the west, and Gun in the east. Churches in the Grand-Popo area use Gen, Gun, Fon, Ewe and/or French in their services/mass. Churches in Kétonou, to the east of Benin, use Gun or Fon in their services/mass.

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11Gen is also known as Mina.
12The Keta language area is in Ghana (Duthie 1998:92), while the Anglo are primarily in Ghana and western Togo (Capo 1986:11–12, Carte 1b).
13Informants in the east appeared to use the names “Gun” and “Alada” interchangeably. However, Capo (1986:99) makes a distinction between the two names, using them to refer to two distinct speech varieties, which are not even classified in the same cluster. A survey of the Alada language area was planned for June 1999.
14Défi is not mentioned in Capo’s list of Gbe varieties (1986), nor is it noted in the Ethnologue (Grimes 1996). Thus at this point, no classification of Défi is available. Those interviewed in Glégbonou and Kétonou described Défi as being slightly similar to Gun, but definitely not the same as Seto (Asént), another Gbe variety spoken in the same area. Défi is spoken east of the Route Nationale Inter-Etats (RNIE) 1 leading to Porto-Novo, between Porto-Novo and the coast.
2.7. Non-formal education

Non-formal education in the area is conducted in Gen, Gun, and Fon. No literacy materials in Xwla were known to be available, though according to the literacy coordinator for the Grand-Popo sous-préfecture, they are hoping to start literacy in Xwla soon.

2.8. Religious situation

The Xwla people are traditionally animists (Vanderaa 1991:7). However, there are also Christians and Muslims present in the area, although the latter are apparently restricted to the eastern communities.

Regarding the surveyed villages, there are Roman Catholic churches in Glégbonou and Kétonou, and masses are also held in Coho, though the church there is still in the planning stages. In addition, there are Methodist churches in Glégbonou, Houalacomey, and Kétonou; Cherubim and Seraphim and Christianisme Celeste churches in Glégbonou and Kétonou; Pentecostal and Renaissance churches in Onkouihoué; and Jehovah’s Witnesses and indigenous churches in Kétonou. In Avlo-Plage and Avlo-Village, according to interviewed community leaders, there are no churches.

Mosques can be found in Glégbonou and Aholouyémè, located down the road from Kétonou.

3. Previous linguistic research

The Gbe language continuum has been the subject of much research, especially over the last 20 years. Capo began an extensive comparative study of the Gbe language continuum in 1971. His phonological and morpho-phonological comparisons were the basis for his doctoral dissertation and were later published under the title Renaissance du gbe (Capo 1986) and A comparative phonology of Gbe (Capo 1991). Focusing on phonological and morpho-phonological characteristics, Capo (1986:99ff, 1991:11ff) arrives at five basic Gbe clusters: Aja, Ewe, Fon, and Phla-Phera. Xwla groups within the Phla-Phera cluster together with Alada, Ayizo, Gbési, Kotafon, Saxwe, Se, Tofin, Toli, and Xwela. Capo (1986:100) notes though, that the varieties of this cluster differ substantially as far as their vocabulary is concerned.

Based on Capo’s (1986) study and information provided by the language map of Benin (CENALA 1990), SIL chose 50 varieties of the Gbe continuum for the elicitation of word and phrase lists. These elicitations, done between 1988 and 1992, constituted phase one of the larger study of the Gbe language continuum. For Xwla, two word lists were elicited, one in the western part of the language area, more precisely in Adamé in the Lacs préfecture in Togo’s Maritime region. The second list was elicited in the eastern part of the area, in Djeffa, in the sous-préfecture of Sémè-Kpodji in the Ouémé département. The elicited word lists were analyzed according to prescribed methodology in order to determine the degree of lexical similarity between these varieties. (See Kluge 1997.)

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15 Capo (1986:99ff) refers to Ewe as Vhe, to Aja as Ajá, and to Phla-Phera as Phla-Pherá.
16 The National Linguistic Commission has also collected word lists for selected Gbe varieties (CNL du Bénin, n. d.).
17 For details see Appendix C.
18 No results from phrase list analysis are included in this report.
The resulting computations for the Phla-Phera cluster are shown in Table 1. In addition, a number of Gbe varieties, which are not classified by Capo (1986) in any of his proposed Gbe clusters, have been added to the computation due to their high lexical similarities to the varieties of the Phla-Phera cluster: Gbokpa, Raxe, and Seto. Furthermore, given the focus of the current study, i.e. levels of comprehension of Fon, Gen, and Gun among the Xwla communities, these varieties have also been added to the table.

The following table shows the percentage matrix\(^{19}\) which reports the number of lexically similar items as a percentage of the basic vocabulary. (Wimbish 1989:59; for the variance matrix showing the range of error for each count see Table 4, Appendix C.)

Table 1: Percentage matrix

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<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
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<th>Xwla (from Djeffa)</th>
<th>Alada</th>
<th>Kotafon</th>
<th>Ayizo</th>
<th>Gbokpa</th>
<th>Gbési</th>
<th>Xwela</th>
<th>Xwla (from Adamé)</th>
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The results of the wordlist analysis show a difference in degree of lexical similarity in regard to the western variety from Adamé and the eastern one from Djeffa with a lexical similarity of 80.3% (73±7.3%) at the upper confidence limit\(^{20}\) of the calculations between both of them.

Regarding the western variety from Adamé, the overall degree of lexical similarity is >80% at the upper confidence limit of the calculations between Xwla and the Phla-Phera varieties as listed by Capo (1986) as well as between Xwla and Gbokpa, Raxe and Seto. The only exception is Ayizo with 76.8% (69±7.8%).

For the eastern Xwla variety from Djeffa, the results of the wordlist analysis show an overall degree of lexical similarity of >80% at the upper confidence limit of the calculations between Xwla and the more eastern Phla-Phera varieties such as Alada, Seto, Tofin, and Toli, with the exception of Ayizo with 78.5% (71±7.5%). Regarding the more western Phla-Phera varieties the degree of lexical similarity is

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\(^{19}\)For this computation, morphemes that are apparently affixed to the form used in another variety are ignored if they occur always in the same position. Including all morphemes in the analysis results in an overall lower degree of lexical similarity, as shown in Table 5 and Table 6, Appendix C.

\(^{20}\)Upper confidence limit = percentage + range of error (variance).
considerably lower with overall ≤80% for Gbési, Raxe, Saxwe, Se, and Xwela. The exceptions are Gbokpa with 81.9% (75±6.9%) and Kotafon with 83.7% (77±6.7%).

With regard to Fon, Gen, and Gun, the degree of lexical similarity is >80% at the upper confidence limit between both Xwla varieties and Fon as well as Gun, whereas it is considerably lower between Xwla and Gen: 66% for Xwla from Djeffa; 73.3% for Xwla from Adamé.

4. Research questions

The purpose of this survey is twofold: (1) to assess whether and to what extent existing literature and literacy efforts in Fon, Gen, and Gun could extend to the Xwla communities, or whether an additional language-based development program in Xwla would be beneficial, and (2) to gather data that would help determine the nature and extent of SIL’s possible involvement among these communities.

For the current study, the evaluation of need for separate literature is based on criteria established by Marmor (1997). More specifically, the evaluation of literature development needs is based on the factors of dialect intercomprehension, language vitality, and language attitudes. Pertinent to the issue of a potential reference dialect for the Phla-Phera cluster, information regarding the Xwla dialect situation and the relationship of Xwla to other Gbe varieties (dealt with under dialect intercomprehension and language attitudes) was collected.

1. Dialect intercomprehension
   - What are the geographical boundaries of the Xwla speech variety and which dialects of Xwla, if any, exist?
   - What are the Fon, Gen, and Gun comprehension levels throughout the Xwla communities and might these levels be adequate for the use of Fon, Gen or Gun written materials?
   - Are there any other developed Gbe varieties that are understood at high levels throughout the Xwla community and which Gbe varieties would the Xwla communities choose to group themselves with in terms of comprehension?

2. Language vitality
   - Are there indications of occurring or impending language shift?

3. Language attitudes
   - What are the Xwla community’s attitudes toward the oral and written forms of Fon, Gen, and Gun?
   - What are the Xwla community’s attitudes toward other related Gbe varieties?
   - What are community attitudes toward the development of Xwla?

There are some additional questions, most of which are directly related to the priority and strategy criteria outlined above and which provide updated information for the area. These questions are:

   - What is the ethnic identity of Xwla speakers?
   - What is the size of the Xwla population?
   - Are there already literacy classes in the Xwla area? If so, in which language(s)?
What is the religious make-up of the Xwla communities and which languages are used in the religious domain?

5. Methodology

5.1. Assessment techniques

The survey approach was based on Stalder’s description of Rapid Appraisal Survey (Stalder 1996a). The main research techniques used were the community interview, and Rapid Appraisal Recorded Text Tests (RA-RTTs).

Community questionnaires were used to explore the following topics: dialect intercomprehension, language vitality, language attitudes, ethnic identity, literacy situation, and religious make-up. RA-RTTs were administered to investigate Fon, Gen, and Gun comprehension. (See Appendix D for an example of the questionnaire and Appendix G for the RA-RTT texts.)

RA-RTTs allow for a general indication of comprehension, either good, partial, or no comprehension. These levels are defined by Stalder (1996b:26) as follows:

- Level 3 Good comprehension: The story is retold accurately and the people are able to give details.
- Level 2 Partial comprehension: When retelling the different sections, people invent and add to the story. If asked, they are not able to answer details.\(^{21}\)
- Level 1 No Comprehension: The group is not able to respond even to the general story lines.

The Gen text was developed in 1997 by a first language (L1) speaker of Gen, a national linguist. The Fon and Gun texts were elicited in 1998 from L1 speakers of Fon and Gun, respectively, both working as translators for the United Bible Society of Benin (Alliance Biblique au Bénin).

Baseline calibration was performed by administering the tests to five native speakers of Fon and Gun and three native speakers of Gen, respectively, playing two or three sentences at a time, and asking the L1 speakers to report what they had heard. Only those items which were retold accurately were retained on the tally list for that particular test. During the calibration of the three texts, the researchers were assisted by the three L1 speakers from whom the texts had been elicited.

This survey’s modifications to Stalder’s (1996b) method are the baseline calibration and shorter replay sections.

In addition to the community interviews and RA-RTTs, informal interviews were held with literacy workers and church leaders. (See Appendix E and Appendix F for examples of the questionnaires.)

5.2. Implementation

The research was conducted in six communities, initially chosen based on information taken from the Atlas sociolinguistique du Bénin (CNL du Bénin 1983) with an effort being made to have a geographically representative sample (more accessible versus more remote villages; northern versus southern, eastern versus western). During informal interviews held with the chief of each village in

\(^{21}\) Stalder (1996b:26) adds that it “is interesting to observe attitudes and to compare what the same people expressed about intercomprehension in the context of the enquiries based on questionnaires.”
order to make arrangements for the official community interviews, it was confirmed that these villages were Xwla-speaking. The following villages were selected:

1. **Avlo-Plage**
   - located in the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo, in the rural community of Avlo
   - chosen because of its isolated location at the eastern border of the western Xwla language area

2. **Coho**
   - located in the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo, in the rural community of Adjaha
   - chosen due to its location at the northwestern edge of the western Xwla language area

3. **Glégbonou**
   - located in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, in the rural community of Ekpè
   - chosen due to its central location in the eastern Xwla language area and for its relative proximity to the main road and the town of Sèmè-Kpodji

4. **Houalacomey**
   - located in the sous-prefecture of Abomey-Calavi, in the commune of Godomè
   - chosen due to its isolation from the rest of the Xwla-speaking communities

5. **Kétonou**
   - located in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, in the rural community of Aholouyémè
   - chosen due to its location at the western edge of the eastern Xwla language area, on the edge of Lake Nokoué

6. **Onkouihoué**
   - located in the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo, in the urban community of Grand-Popo
   - chosen due to its location on the main road running through the Xwla area

Community interviews were conducted in all six locations, after which the RA-RTTs were administered, alternating the order of the RA-RTTs from village to village. The interviews and RA-RTTs were conducted with the same cross-section of the population. In the western communities, i.e. Avlo-Plage, Coho, and Onkouihoué, both the Fon and Gen RA-RTTs were administered. In Glégbonou, both the Fon and Gun RA-RTTs were administered, and in Kétonou the Gun RA-RTT was administered. The Fon RA-RTT was not administered in Kétonou due to constraints imposed upon the researchers by the community. No RA-RTTs were administered in Houalacomey, since due to its location in the greater metropolitan area of Cotonou, and the resulting amount of contacts with Fon, Gen, and Gun speakers, it was assumed that members of this community would have higher levels of comprehension of these major Gbe varieties than more isolated communities.
The respondents for the community interviews consisted of the chief or délégué and his elders, as well as people from each of the following “social groups:”

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

In general, there were at least five people from each “social group,” if not many more, with the exceptions being Glégbonou and Kétonou. In Glégbonou, reportedly all the young women were off looking for wood, and there were only three older women who were willing to participate in the Fon RA-RTT and only one willing to help with the Gun. All other women seen refused. In Kétonou, at the beginning of the Gun RA-RTT, there were only three younger women and three older women, though this was augmented in the end by one and three arrivals, respectively. All subjects reported that they were Xwla.

The RA-RTTs were executed by first playing the whole narrative to the group, and then replaying it section by section (a section being about 2 or 3 sentences). During replay, after each section, one social group was to retell the contents of the section in Xwla with some care being taken to include the whole social group in the process, e.g. by each time asking a different person from the targeted social group to retell the narrative section. If necessary and feasible, the social group was asked to furnish more details and if requested, the section was replayed. During the retelling, a tally was taken based on the tally lists previously established during the baseline calibration of both tests.

During the field research in the western portion of the Xwla language area, the researchers were accompanied by a literacy worker for the Grand-Popo sous-préfecture who served the researchers as interpreter throughout most of the Xwla area. A literacy worker for the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji interpreted for the researchers during the Glégbonou interview. Members of the local communities volunteered to interpret for the Houalacomey and Kétonou interviews.

5.3. Terminology and presentation

In discussions of the questionnaire results, “everyone” means all interviewed persons, i.e. the communities of Avlo-Plage, Coho, Glégbonou, Houalacomey, Kétonou, and Onkouihoué, in as far as the question under consideration has been posed to them. If no specific informants are mentioned, the same six groups, that is, all those interviewed in the six interview locations, are implied.

In the questionnaire results, it is understood that all data are reported, even if not explicitly stated as such.

6. Results

In the following sections, data gathered from community interviews and informal interviews with regional literacy coordinators, village literacy workers, and church leaders, as well as the results from the RA-RTTs, will be presented according to the following topics: Xwla dialect situation (Section 6.1), Xwla and related Gbe varieties (Section 6.2), tested comprehension of Fon, Gen, and Gun (Section 6.3), language vitality (Section 6.4), literacy situation (Section 6.5) and religious situation (Section 6.6).

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22The exception being Houalacomey, where the interview was only conducted with the chief and his elders.
6.1. Xwla dialect situation

Everyone interviewed agreed that there are no dialects of Xwla, though there are distinguishable accents from one village to another. Even though the word list analysis appears to indicate the existence of two distinct varieties of Xwla, one to the east and one to the west, the Xwla people themselves, while acknowledging differences between the Xwla of the east and the Xwla of the west, do not perceive them as being separate dialects.

6.1.1. Western and eastern Xwla

While there are no dialects per se of Xwla, those Xwla speakers living outside of the Grand-Popo region confirmed the word list analysis, reporting that there are two distinct varieties within the Xwla language: the Xwla of Grand-Popo and the Xwla of the area around and east of Lake Nokoué, e.g. the Xwla of Glégbonou, Houalacomey and Kétonou. There was a lack of consensus though as to the reason behind this distinction. For the most part, those interviewed reported that the speech variety spoken in the east is the same as that spoken in the fetisher convents in the west, that the founders of the eastern villages were fetishers who fled the west at a time of war. However, it was also reported that these founders spoke like the people of Grand-Popo, and it is just due to time and language evolution that the two varieties are different now.

All those interviewed in the east agreed that intercomprehension is difficult, but again, there was disagreement as to the level of that difficulty. The people of Kétonou stated that it was “a little” difficult to understand the people of Grand-Popo, center of the western variety. The people of Glégbonou reported that when they travel to Grand-Popo, they can understand the fetishers, but that it is only with difficulty that they understand everyone else, claiming that Gen has influenced the Xwla of Grand-Popo. However, they went on to say that the two Xwla groups can understand each other, though they remain unable to speak with the others’ accent.

The people of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué, to the west, when asked about Xwla-speakers to the east, near Porto-Novo, reported that the Xwla spoken there was understandable, though with a distinguishable accent. They stated that it was close to the language used by the fetishers, with differences from their western Xwla at the level of pronunciation and vocabulary.

The people of Coho, located in the northwest, declared that they were aware of the existence of Xwla speakers in the Porto-Novo area and reported that these Xwla are now known as the Tofin. According to those interviewed at Coho, the Tofin were originally Xwla, but they are descended from fetishers, and the language that they now speak daily is the language that was only used by the fetishers in the Coho (Grand-Popo) area. These fetishers left the Coho area at a time of war and fled to the Porto-Novo region. Those Xwla who can understand the Tofin are the fetishers or those who have lived in an area where Tofin speakers are present. It is not yet known whether the Tofin people would agree with this history, but it was evident during the survey that there are indeed Xwla-speaking communities living in the Porto-Novo area who would not consider themselves to be Tofin.23

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23 A SIL survey of the Tofin language area was planned for June 1999.
6.1.2. Within western Xwla

Xwla villages do not all speak exactly alike, even within these two categories. The most extreme differences appear to be between villages along different borders of the Xwla language areas. For example, the community of Avlo-Plage, along the coast and therefore at the southern edge of the western Xwla region, when asked to give an example of an accent which differed strongly from their own, thought of the village of Adjaha, located along the northern border. Those interviewed in Coho, in the northwest, reported that the Xwla spoken in Djègbadji, to the southeast along the coast, is quite different (“diffère carrément”) from that of Coho. However, in spite of these differences, these varieties are not considered hard to understand, even by children.

6.1.3. Within eastern Xwla

The people of Glégbonou reported that among Xwla speakers east of Lake Nokoué, there are also different accents and some differences in vocabulary, even between Glégbonou and Kpodji, which are only about 15 minutes apart by car. This was explained as being a question of language contact. The elders of Houlacomey reported that “as soon as a group of Xwla arrive in an area, the language of the area begins to impact the Xwla tones, accents and even words.” Those interviewed in Glégbonou stated that their speech variety has been influenced by Yoruba and reported that the Xwla spoken in Kétonou is a purer form of the language. Those interviewed in Kétonou agreed, stating that Xwla is spoken best in their village. After their own village, as second choice they listed Ekpè, followed by Kpodji and then Djeffa.

6.1.4. Unity of the Xwla ethnic group

In spite of the differences between western and eastern Xwla, all Xwla reported that they definitely consider themselves to be one ethnic group and not two. All Xwla have the same origin, Tado, and all Xwla are considered to be brothers and not strangers, no matter what variety they speak. The Xwla of Glégbonou consider themselves to be sons (descendants) of the Xwla of Grand-Popo. Some of those interviewed noted though that relationships were likely to be closer within the two communities than between them.

Representatives of all the Xwla areas got together at Grand-Popo in September 1998 and formed an association – Association Nonvitcha, whose goal is to promote the socio-economic and cultural development of the Xwla people.

6.2. Xwla and related Gbe varieties

In order to arrive at some indication of which other Gbe varieties the Xwla would choose to group themselves with, the communities surveyed were asked to classify related Gbe varieties as being either “like” or “unlike” Xwla. They were also asked to describe which varieties they would choose to use when faced with a need to communicate with a speaker of another Gbe variety, as well as which varieties they find easiest, and hardest, to understand.
The following results are presented. The languages reported as being most “like” Xwla are dealt with first.

6.2.1. Xwela

Everyone agreed that Xwela is “close to” or “like” Xwla. The elders of Houalacomey, near Cotonou, reported that the “Xwela and Xwla are always together.” The people of Avlo-Plage, in the west, said that there is only a little difference between Xwla and Xwela and that Xwela was “bon à entendre” (good to hear). They chose Xwela as being the Gbe variety that they understand best, followed by Gen and Fon. Xwela, along with Fon, was reported to be the second easiest Gbe variety to understand by those interviewed in Onkouihoué, near Grand-Popo, when given the choice between Fon, Gen and Xwela. The people of Coho, also in the west, described Xwela as being easy.

For the most part, to communicate with a Xwela speaker, the Xwla speaker will continue to speak his own variety and the Xwela will understand (and vice versa). However, a Xwla speaker from Onkouihoué, in the west, will switch to Xwela to communicate with a Xwela speaker, and the Xwela speaker will reportedly either reply in Xwela or Xwla.

6.2.2. Seto

The elders of Houalacomey, located near Cotonou, considered Seto\(^{24}\) (near Porto-Novo) to be like Xwla as well.

6.2.3. Tofin

Tofin is also reportedly like Xwla, according to the elders of Houalacomey.

The community of Coho, in the west, even reported that the Tofin were, originally, Xwla who left the Grand-Popo region during a time of war. The ancestors of the Tofin of today were fetishers, so that the current speech variety Tofin is reportedly descended from the language spoken in the convent. However, no verification of this information was obtained.

6.2.4. Saxwe, Se and Raxe

Most communities grouped these three varieties together, considering them equally like or unlike Xwla.

1. Saxwe

In general, those interviewed stated that Saxwe resembles Xwla. For example, Saxwe is considered to be “easy” by the people of Coho, in the northwest. The only exception was the community of Avlo-Plage, along the western coast, who thought that Saxwe is different from Xwla and reported that when they listen to someone speaking Saxwe, they cannot understand

\(^{24}\)Capo (1986:14) refers to Seto as Aséntô.
anything (“ils ne peuvent même pas l’entendre”). However, the people of Avlo-Plage are also, by their location, the ones least likely to have contact with Saxwe speakers, and that perhaps explains their different answer.

In general, when a Xwla speaker meets a Saxwe speaker, each will speak their own variety, and they will be able to communicate. However, the people of Onkouihoué, located in the west, reported that to speak with a Saxwe speaker, they would use either Saxwe or Gen and that the Saxwe, to respond, will speak in Saxwe, Gen or Xwla. The people of Avlo-Plage, since they do not understand Saxwe, would use Gen to communicate with Saxwe speakers.

The researchers are unsure that the eastern communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou really understood which variety was being referred to by the name “Saxwe.” However, interviewees reported that they would speak Xwla to a Saxwe speaker, he would respond in Saxwe, and they would manage to communicate.

2. Se

The elders of Houalacomey, located near Cotonou, reported that Se is the same as Saxwe and therefore “like” Xwla. Those interviewed in Onkouihoué, in the west, agreed. The community of Coho, in the northwest, reported that the Se spoken in Djibio, Doutou and Gongboémadovina, located in the sous-préfecture of Houéyogbé, is especially close to Xwla. Again, the people of Avlo-Plage, along the western coast, described Se as being different from Xwla.

When a Xwla from Coho meets a Se speaker, the Xwla will speak Xwla and the Se speaker Se, and they will be able to communicate. In spite of their view that Se is “like” Xwla, the people of Onkouihoué would use Gen to communicate with a Se speaker. Likewise, the community of Avlo-Plage would also use Gen to speak with Se people.

The eastern communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou were not aware of the existence of the Se variety.

3. Raxe

Again, the same communities considered Raxe to be similar to Xwla, while the community of Avlo-Plage described Raxe as being different.

A Xwla speaker from Onkouihoué will use Raxe to speak to a Raxe speaker. The Raxe speaker though may respond in his own variety or in Xwla. When a Xwla from Coho encounters a Raxe speaker, the Xwla will speak in Xwla and the Raxe will speak in Aja whereas the people of Avlo-Plage will switch to Gen to communicate with a Raxe.

Again, the communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou, located in the east, were not aware of the existence of Raxe.
6.2.5. Aja

In general, Aja is thought of as being different from Xwla and to speak with someone from Azovè, a Xwla speaker will switch to a language of wider communication: those of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué, both in the west, choosing Gen; those of Glégbonou, in the east, choosing Fon or Gun. The Aja will respond likewise. The people of Glégbonou reported that Aja has some similarities with Xwla (“tend vers la langue xwla”), but not enough for mutual intelligibility. The elders of Houalacomey, located centrally near Cotonou, stated that to communicate with an Aja speaker, they may try to each speak their own variety, but that this does not always work well and sometimes they end up needing to find interpreters. When given the choice between Aja, Ewe, Fon and Gun, those interviewed in Avlo-Plage said that Aja was the one they understood least. The people of Onkouihoué agreed.

The notable exception to this generality was the community of Coho, located in the northwest, who would continue to speak their own variety to an Aja speaker, with the Aja responding likewise. The people of Coho described Aja as being “easy,” along with Saxwe and Xwela. It should be noted that of all the Xwla communities surveyed, Coho is the closest to the Aja language area.

6.2.6. Ayizo

Opinions regarding the “close”-ness of Ayizo, as well as language choices, are clearly influenced by the amount of contact communities have with Ayizo speakers. The people of Coho and the elders of Houalacomey, both located close to Ayizo villages, agreed that when a Xwla meets an Ayizo (or a Kotafon),26 the Xwla will speak Xwla, the Ayizo Ayizo, and they will be able to understand each other. However, those interviewed in Coho also chose Ayizo (or Kotafon) as being the Gbe variety they have the most difficulty understanding.

Xwla speakers from Onkouihoué and Avlo-Plage, in the west near Grand-Popo, will use Gen to communicate with Ayizo speakers. The people of Avlo-Plage were referring specifically to the Ayizo-Tori27 variety of Ayizo, which they consider to be very different from Xwla. The people from Glégbonou, in the east, will use Fon to communicate with an Ayizo speaker.

6.2.7. Ewe

Ewe is thought to be very different from Xwla, and an Ewe and a Xwla will use Gen to speak to each other or look for an interpreter.

When given the choice between Aja, Ayizo, Ewe, Fon, Gun, Gen and Xwela, the elders of Houalacomey, located near Cotonou, stated that Ewe would be the most difficult Gbe variety to understand.

25The researchers referred specifically to the Aja-Hwe variety of Aja as spoken in Azovè, Hwe being the Aja variety chosen for language development. (See Tompkins et al. 1997.)
26The Kotafon consider themselves to be Ayizo, and the names are sometimes used interchangeably. Two villages located near Coho, Cotocoli and Tokpa-Aizo, are claimed by both the Kotafon and Ayizo communities. It has not yet been determined which name the people of Cotocoli and Tokpa-Aizo would use to describe themselves. (See Volumes 2 and 3.)
27The Ayizo-Tori speech variety can be found in the region surrounding the town of Tori-Bossito, in the sous-préfecture of the same name. (See Volume 2.)
6.2.8. Fon

Almost everyone agreed that Fon is very different from Xwla, with only the western community of Onkouihoué reporting that Fon resembles Xwla.

However, opinions varied as to which speech variety a Xwla would choose to use to communicate with a Fon speaker. The Xwla of Coho, while declaring that they do not have many contacts with Fon people due to their location in the northwest corner of the Xwla language area, nevertheless thought that when a Fon speaker and a Xwla speaker meet, they would both speak Xwla to communicate. Reportedly, when a Xwla speaker from Onkouihoué, in the west, or Kétonou, in the east, encounters a Fon speaker, the Xwla will speak Xwla, the Fon will speak Fon, and they will understand each other. The Xwla from Avlo-Plage, Glégbonou and Houalacomey will switch to Fon to communicate with Fon people. The elders of Houalacomey attributed this in part at least to an attitude difference between the Fon and the Xwla peoples, stating that the Xwla have made an effort to understand Fon, while the Fon have not made a similar effort to understand Xwla.

The people of Avlo-Plage, located along the western coast, reported that the women who go to the market can easily express themselves in Fon and gave Fon as the third easiest Gbe variety to understand (after Gen and Xwela). Between Aja, Ayizo, Fon, Gen, Gun and Xwela, those interviewed in Houalacomey, located near Cotonou, said that Fon and Gun are the ones they understand best, even better than Xwela. The western community of Coho said that Fon is easier than Gun, though not as easy as Gen. The people of Onkouihoué, located near Grand-Popo, agreed, giving Fon as the second-easiest variety to understand, along with Xwela and after Gen.

Four out of the six communities surveyed agreed that a child of six will not be able to understand Fon, although a teenager of 15 probably would be able to. The community of Kétonou and the elders of Houalacomey differed though, thinking that their six-year old children would be able to understand Fon.

6.2.9. Gun

Once again, the issue of contact came into play as people responded to the question of whether Gun was “like” Xwla or not. The people of Kétonou reported that Gun, which is the language of wider communication for their region, is a little bit close to (“un peu comme”) Xwla. They went on to state that, for them, Gun is easier to understand than Aja, Fon, Gen, or Xwela. The elders of Houalacomey, located slightly west to the Gun area, agreed, though they also consider Fon to be easy to understand. The people of Glégbonou, also in the east, could not come to a consensus as to whether Gun was close to Xwla or not, though all members of the community understand Gun well—better than Fon or Gen.

The people of Kétonou stated that when they speak with their Gun neighbors, they use Xwla and the Gun use Gun and they are able to communicate. However, when a Xwla speaker from Houalacomey meets a Gun speaker, the Xwla may speak Xwla or he may change to Gun. The Gun speaker though will always respond in Gun. The people of Glégbonou will switch to Gun to communicate with a Gun speaker. Even a child of six from one of these communities will be able to understand Gun.

The western communities of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué, who have fewer contacts with Gun speakers, reported that Gun is not like Xwla. To speak to Gun speakers, the Xwla of Avlo-Plage will either try to mix Gun and Fon or will switch to Gen. A Xwla speaker from Onkouihoué will reportedly choose to
speak Gen to a Gun person, and the Gun will respond in the same manner. The community of Coho, also located in the west of Benin, does not have any contacts with the Gun and was unable to give information on their language choices when meeting a Gun speaker. However, they did state that a child of six would not be able to understand Gun. The people of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué agreed, stating though that a teenager of 15 would probably be able to understand it.

6.2.10. Gen

Most communities interviewed considered Gen to be very different from Xwla. The exception was the western community of Onkouihoué who considered Gen to be “like” Xwla.

Opinions on how easy Gen is to understand appear to depend entirely on exposure. Those from the west, i.e. the people interviewed in Coho as well as those in Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué, stated that Gen was the variety they understood best, when given the choice between Aja, Ayizo, Ewe, Fon, Gun, Gen and Xwela. However, for the communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou, located in eastern Benin, Gen is the hardest Gbe variety to understand.

The communities in the western Xwla language areas where Gen is the language of wider communication reported that even a child of six from their communities can understand Gen. However, those living in the eastern Xwla language area, i.e. the communities of Houalacomoy, Glégbonou and Kétonou, stated that their six-year old children would not be able to understand Gen. The elders of Houalacomoy gave as their opinion that children would start to understand Gen around the age of nine whereas the people of Glégbonou and Kétonou said that children would only begin to understand Gen if they lived in a Gen-speaking area for a while.

Whether Gen was considered to be different or not did not appear to effect language choices. When a Xwla speaker from Coho (where Gen is not seen as being similar to Xwla) meets a Gen speaker, reportedly both will speak in Xwla to communicate. The people of Kétonou, in the east, also see Gen as not being close to Xwla and yet reported that when talking to a Gen speaker, they will be able to speak Xwla, he will speak Gen, and they will be able to communicate. However, the western Xwla of Onkouihoué, who alone reported considering Gen to be close to Xwla, will switch to Gen to communicate with Gen speakers. Furthermore, Xwla speakers from centrally-located Houalacomoy, (where Gen is considered to be the hardest Gbe variety to understand), and Gen speakers will speak to each other in Gen. Generally, a Xwla from Glégbonou will switch to Fon or Gun to communicate with the Gen, since the people of Glégbonou do not live in an area where Gen is widely used. Instead most people choose Fon or Gun as the language of wider communication. One man from Glégbonou, located in the east, reported that the Xwla and Gen can communicate to some degree, but that the Xwla find it easier to understand the Gen than the Gen do the Xwla. However, there was some confusion as to whether this was referring to L1 Gen speakers or rather to ethnic Xwla who are abandoning Xwla for Gen.
6.2.11. Défi

The people of Glégbonou, in the east, could not agree as to whether Défi\(^{28}\) was “close” to Xwla or not. It is also unclear as to whether they were referring to geographical proximity or linguistic relatedness. The community of Kétonou, also in the east, described Défi as being a little bit (“un peu”) like Gun and therefore not like Xwla.

6.2.12. Toli

According to the community of Glégbonou, a Xwla speaker will also continue speaking Xwla with a Toli (or Gnonfan\(^{29}\)) speaker and will understand when the Toli responds in his own variety.

6.3. Tested comprehension of Fon, Gen, and Gun

RA-RTT testing was conducted in three languages: Fon and Gen in the west and Fon and Gun in the east. As explained in the Section 5.1 ‘Assessment techniques,’ RA-RTTs result in an assessment of understanding on a three-level scale: good, partial or no comprehension. Because of considerable differences in tape quality, story structure and content, it is not possible to compare exactly the relative understanding of Fon, Gen, and Gun from the tally results.

Overall, the RA-RTT results indicate “good comprehension” (Stalder 1996b) for Fon, Gen, and Gun. Throughout the testing in all five villages, some items were missed and some were changed, but there were no major semantic differences between expected and reported items. The changes could possibly be attributed to the difficulties in a multilingual testing situation; that is, the people were hearing the stories in Fon, Gen, and Gun, retelling them in Xwla, and their answers were then being translated for the researchers into French. This could result in slight semantic changes in reported items. (See Appendix H, Table 7 showing the comprehension levels of Fon, Gen, and Gun for the tested communities.)

For the Fon RA-RTT, all social groups tested in Avlo-Plage, Glégbonou and Onkouihoué demonstrated “good comprehension.” However, in Coho, all social groups, except for the older men, struggled with the Fon RA-RTT. Their level of comprehension remains unclear, probably on the line between “good” and “partial.” While the respondents did not invent or add to the story, one indication of “partial comprehension,” they failed to recount a significant amount of details during the retelling of the story. As was noted in Section 5.1 ‘Assessment techniques,’ there were no young women available for testing in Glégbonou.

Again, for the Gen RA-RTT, there was “good comprehension” in Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué, for all social groups. In Coho though, the level of comprehension demonstrated by the young women was unclear, probably again on the line between “good” and “partial,” though there was no indication of “partial comprehension,” as signaled by interviewees inventing and adding to the story. However, all other social groups in Coho demonstrated “good comprehension.”

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\(^{28}\) As already mentioned (see Footnote 14), Défi is not mentioned in Capo’s list of Gbe varieties (1986), neither is it noted in the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 1996). Thus, at this point, no classification of Défi is available. Défi is spoken east of the Route Nationale Inter-Etats (RNIE) 1 leading to Porto Novo, between Porto-Novo and the coast.

\(^{29}\) The researchers were informed that the Toli speakers of the region north of Kétonou are referred to by the name Gnonfan.
The Gun RA-RTT testing in the eastern part of the Xwla language area demonstrated a “good comprehension” of Gun by the villages of Glégbonou and Kétonou. However as was previously mentioned in Section 5.1 ‘Assessment techniques,’ the women of Glégbonou were not adequately represented during the RA-RTT. The younger women were reportedly all away looking for wood, and there was only one older Xwla woman who was willing to participate in the testing process. While she did well and appeared to have a level of “good comprehension,” her results cannot be taken as being representative for the whole social group.

6.4. Language vitality

L1 speakers of Xwla use Xwla in all domains, and there are no indications of occurring or impending language shift.

6.5. Literacy situation

In the western portion of the Xwla language area, i.e. in the Grand-Popo sous-préfecture, literacy classes are conducted in Gen. In regard to the surveyed villages, government-supported classes are held in Coho, while classes run by the NGO Africa Expectif are held for the women of Avlo-Plage.

Concerning the Xwla villages located along the coast, connecting the western and eastern Xwla language areas, literacy classes in the Ouidah sous-préfecture are held in Fon. However, it is not known whether any of the Xwla villages in this area are participating in these courses. The elders of Houalacomy, in the sous-préfecture of Abomey-Calavi, reported that a nearby Catholic church was holding literacy classes in Fon.

To the east, in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, literacy efforts are in Gun. However, the literacy coordinator for the Sèmè-Kpodji sous-préfecture, reported that according to his subordinates, their Xwla students have difficulties mastering Gun, and so classes are held in a mix of Gun and Xwla. However, he went on to say that students do not have any problems understanding Gun, but only in expressing themselves in Gun. Regarding the surveyed villages, the sous-préfecture is sponsoring classes in Kétonou and the NGOs CIRAPIP, CAEB and CESTAS are working with the women of Glégbonou.

Interviews were conducted with the regional literacy coordinators for the sous-préfectures encompassing the Xwla-speaking regions, in order to determine if there were any plans for Xwla language development. The literacy coordinator for the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo, stated that he and his literacy workers are starting to plan for a literacy program in Xwla. They are waiting for permission from the national office, and then they will start training teachers to do Xwla literacy. However, as of yet, there are no primers or other documents in Xwla.

Interviewees in Kétonou, in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, declared that the regional coordinator was in the middle of preparing written materials to start literacy efforts in Xwla. However, it is not clear which coordinator they were referring to, since the literacy coordinator for the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji stated that he had no plans to start Xwla literacy, though he thought it would be a good idea.
Only a few attempts of someone writing in Xwla were known, though interviewees in Coho reported that once a person became literate in Gen, he should be able to write in Xwla as well.

While everyone would prefer literacy in Xwla, all surveyed communities but one appeared to be content with the language policy for their area. That is to say, the people to the west, i.e. the communities of Avlo-Plage, Coho and Onkouihoué, reported that Gen was the developed variety they understood best and that they would prefer literacy in Gen, which is indeed the government policy for their region. As noted above, the women of Avlo-Plage already have the option of attending literacy classes in Gen, and the men reported that they would be interested in Gen literacy as well. The community of Onkouihoué, the only western village surveyed which does not already have some literacy efforts underway, stated definitively that they would only be interested in literacy in Xwla or Gen, not in Fon or Gun.

The eastern villages of Kétonou and Glégbonou reported that Gun is the developed variety they understand best, and members of these communities are already involved in Gun literacy efforts. The one surveyed community who is not content with the current language policy is the centrally-located community of Houalacomey whose elders reported that the Xwla of Houalacomey would prefer literacy in Gun, instead of Fon, as is the policy of the sous-préfecture in which they are located, Abomey-Calavi. The elders were not sure people would sign up for Fon classes, should they be offered.

The Houalacomey elders also reported that a private literacy center exists at Ekpè, in the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, and that they are doing literacy in Xwla. However, this information was not confirmed.

6.6. Religious situation

The majority of Xwla speakers appear to follow their traditional religions. The researchers saw numerous fetishes and voodoo huts throughout the course of the survey. There are also Christian churches scattered throughout the area, and some mosques are located in the east.

Regarding the villages surveyed in the west, there are neither churches nor mosques in the communities of Avlo-Plage and Avlo-Village. Nor are there any churches or mosques located in Coho, situated in the northwestern corner of the Xwla language area, though a priest or catechist travels out to Coho from nearby Adjaha to conduct mass. However, land has been given to the Roman Catholic church and a church is planned. Gen is used for all aspects of the mass.

In the Onkouihoué region, located near Grand-Popo, there are no mosques. Both Pentecostal and Renaissance churches are present. The Renaissance church uses Gen for most aspects of their services, though announcements are occasionally given in Fon, and the congregation uses the French and Ewe Bibles.

In addition to the community interviews, interviews were held with leaders of the Methodist, Assemblies of God (AOG), Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches of Grand-Popo.

The pastor for the Pentecostal church in Grand-Popo reported that Ewe and French are used for most aspects of their services, although Gen is used sometimes for preaching, Communion, singing and praying. This congregation is currently using Bibles in Ewe and French.
In the Methodist, AOG and Roman Catholic churches, Gen is used for most aspects of the services/mass, including the sermon/homily, Communion, praise and worship time, announcements and prayers, with Gen being the official liturgical language of the Roman Catholic churches in the Grand-Popo area.  

Gen, along with French, is also used for Scripture readings in the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches. In the Methodist church, the New Testament readings are done in Gen whereas French is used for the Old Testament readings. In the Roman Catholic church, both Gen and French are used without further clarifications being given. In the AOG church though, Scriptures are only read in French.

French is further used for the singing and worship times in the AOG and Methodist churches, in addition to Gen, and as far as the Methodist church is concerned, for other aspects of the service as well, if non-Gen speaking visitors are present.

In addition to Gen and French, Ewe, Fon, Gun and English are also used to some extent. The Methodist congregation occasionally reads the Scriptures in Ewe, sings songs in Ewe, and also uses Gun if non-Gen speaking visitors are present. The AOG congregation uses Ewe, Fon and even English during their praise and worship times.

Xwla is only rarely used: for personal prayers in both the Methodist and AOG churches, and, according to the curé of the Roman Catholic church, for the homily out in the villages, although he reports that this is due to the fact that ideas have a greater impact if presented in people’s mother tongue and not due to a lack of understanding of Gen.

Regarding the Xwla villages surveyed in the east, in the Glégbonou area, there are both churches and mosques. The following churches are reported to be in the region: Roman Catholic, Methodist, Cherubim and Seraphim and Christianisme Celeste. The Roman Catholic church uses Fon for all aspects of their mass, with the addition of some French songs. The other three churches use Gun. In the local mosque, the Koranic readings are interpreted into Xwla and Yoruba, and the teaching is done in Yoruba.

There are also a number of churches present in the Kétonou region as well as a mosque located in the neighboring village of Aholouyêmè. Churches reported to be in the area are: Roman Catholic, Methodist, Cherubim and Seraphim, Christianisme Celeste, Jehovah’s Witnesses and indigenous African churches. The Catholic church is reportedly the largest and uses Gun for all aspects of their mass. The Methodist church also uses Gun for all aspects of their service, though Fon is occasionally used for Communion. The informants were not sure which languages are used in the local mosque.

7. Summary and conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to assess whether and to what extent existing literature and literacy efforts in Fon, Gen, and Gun could extend to the Xwla communities, or whether an additional language-based development program in Xwla would be beneficial, and to gather data that would help

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The curé of the Roman Catholic church in Grand-Popo stated that for the diocese of Lokossa, of which Grand-Popo is a part, there are two official liturgical languages, Aja and Gen, with the latter being used in the Grand-Popo area. However, the diocese will be split in the near future, into a northern section and a southern section. It is anticipated that the seat of the bishop for the southern diocese will be located in Grand-Popo.
determine the nature and extent of SIL’s possible involvement among these communities. The following areas were investigated:

1. Comprehension and language attitudes with regard to Fon, Gen and Gun
2. Language vitality of Xwla
3. Language attitudes towards Xwla language development

Pertinent to the issue of a potential reference dialect for the Phla-Phera cluster was the Xwla dialect situation and the relationship of Xwla to other Gbe varieties (comprehension, language attitudes and use in regard to related Gbe varieties). In the following, this issue will be summarized under ‘Xwla and other related Gbe varieties’ (Section 7.4).

7.1. Comprehension and attitudes with regard to Fon, Gen, and Gun

The results for Gen will be summarized first, followed by those for Fon and those for Gun.

7.1.1. Gen

Gen is perceived as being different from Xwla by all surveyed communities. However, the testing of the Gen RA-RTT in the western communities of Avlo-Plage, Coho and Onkouihoué showed “good comprehension” (Stalder 1996b) among all social groups, with the exception of the younger women of Coho whose comprehension was on the border between “good” and “partial.” “Good comprehension” means that the testees were able to tell the story accurately, giving details, and did not add to the story. These three communities also reported the ability to understand Gen, declaring that it was one of the related varieties that they understood best, and the people of Avlo-Plage and Onkouihoué also reported the ability to speak Gen, indicating not just a receptive, but also a productive knowledge of the language. The question remains as to whether there is a competence in Gen in all language domains, particularly at higher levels, and for all social groups in the region – a factor which cannot be examined by the research methods employed here.

These western Xwla communities have a high amount of exposure to Gen, with the Xwla language area being bordered on the west by the Gen. In addition, Gen is the language most widely used in the churches in the western portion of the Xwla language area, as well as the language chosen for non-formal education. Such exposure can be expected to increase proficiency above the base level of inherent intelligibility.

In general, attitudes toward Gen appear to be positive. The western communities who have the most exposure to Gen (Avlo-Plage, Coho and Onkouihoué) are not opposed to literacy in Gen and definitely seem to prefer Gen literacy to literacy in Fon.

7.1.2. Fon

Fon is also considered to be “unlike” Xwla. In spite of this, the testing of the Fon RA-RTT in Avlo-Plage, Glégbonou and Onkouihoué shows “good comprehension” (Stalder 1996b) among all social groups. However, in Coho, three out of the four social groups demonstrated levels of comprehension which are on the border between “good” and “partial.” While the respondents did not invent or add to the story, the main indication for “partial comprehension,” they failed to recount a significant amount
of details during the retelling of the story. Those interviewed in Avlo-Plage, in the west, and Glégbonou, in the east, reported the ability to both understand and speak Fon, indicating not only a receptive, but also productive, knowledge of the language. The question remains, however, as to whether there is a competence in Fon in all language domains, particularly at higher levels, and for all social groups in the region – again a factor which cannot be examined by the research methods employed here.

It is not clear how much Fon language contact actually occurs in the western portion of the Xwla language area. There does not seem to be a large Fon population in the region as one would believe necessary for there to be “good comprehension” throughout the area. This may explain why the people of Coho experienced more difficulties with the Fon RA-RTT since their village was the furthest-west one surveyed, and they themselves reported that they do not have many contacts with Fon speakers. To the east, the western portion of the Xwla language area borders the Fon region. The eastern portion of the Xwla language area, near Porto-Novo, is also bordered by Fon, to the west.

While no negative attitudes toward Fon were demonstrated during the surveys, communities indicated that they would prefer to see literacy continue in Gen or Gun (depending on their location). The only community surveyed in an area where Fon literacy classes are underway, Houalacomey, reported that they would prefer literacy in Gun, stating that they were not sure Xwla-speaking members of their community would sign up for classes in Fon.

7.1.3. Gun

There was some disagreement as to whether Gun was “like” Xwla or not. However, the testing of the Gun RA-RTT in the eastern communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou showed “good comprehension” (Stalder 1996b) among all social groups. It should be noted though that the results for the women of Glégbonou cannot be considered representative. The people of Glégbonou and Kétonou also reported the ability to speak Gun, indicating not just a receptive, but also a productive, knowledge of the language. The question remains though as to whether there is a competence in Gun in all language domains, particularly at higher levels, and for all social groups in the region – again a factor which cannot be examined by the research methods employed here. However, there are already indications that competence in Gun is not necessarily extensive, in that the regional literacy workers reported that their Xwla students find it difficult to express themselves in Gun.

Attitudes toward Gun appear to be positive, and the Xwla living in the east have extensive contact with Gun speakers. Gun is the language of non-formal education for the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, as well as the language used most extensively in the churches of the eastern Xwla language area.

7.2. Xwla language vitality

Xwla is the preferred language for L1 Xwla speakers, used in all domains, and there are no indications for occurring or impending language shift.
7.3. **Attitudes towards Xwla language development**

Everyone interviewed would prefer literacy in Xwla. However, as of yet, there are no written materials available in Xwla. Literacy workers in the sous-préfecture of Grand-Popo, in the Mono département, would like to start a government-sponsored literacy program in Xwla, but permission has not yet been granted.

7.4. **Xwla and other related Gbe varieties**

With respect to the Xwla language situation, no dialectical differences among Xwla speakers were reported, although some differences in accent do exist. However, the Xwla language is seen as being separated into two distinct varieties: the Xwla of Grand-Popo and the Xwla around and east of Lake Nokoué.

With regards to the neighboring Gbe languages, speakers of Xwla agreed that Xwela is “like” Xwla and reported that they understand Xwela well. Those interviewed in Coho and Onkouihoué, located in the west, also reported being able to understand Saxwe, Se and Raxe. The eastern communities of Glégbonou and Kétonou stated that they understand Défi, with the people of Glégbonou also claiming to be able to understand the Toli (near Porto-Novo).

The community of Coho and the elders of Houalacomey reported being able to understand Ayizo, whereas all other communities surveyed reported difficulties comprehending Ayizo.

Regarding Aja, in general, those surveyed agreed that they have difficulties understanding Aja. The only exception was the community of Coho who declared that Aja was “easy.” All interviewees have difficulties understanding Ewe.

7.5. **Conclusions**

The comprehension test results for Fon, Gen, and Gun demonstrate “good comprehension” in the limited contexts in which they were examined for this survey. Therefore, it appears likely that written materials in Gen would be adequately understood in the western Xwla community, that Gun would be adequately understood in the eastern Xwla community and that Fon would be adequately understood throughout both. However, in the west, i.e. the Grand-Popo sous-préfecture, with the attitudes more positive toward Gen than Fon, Gen materials may be more widely accepted than those in Fon. Indeed, Gen is already being widely used in the regional literacy programs and churches. In the sous-préfecture of Sèmè-Kpodji, attitudes are more positive toward Gun than Fon, and Gun is currently the language of choice for literacy efforts and churches. The elders of the centrally-located Houalacomey, in the sous-préfecture of Abomey-Calavi, reported that members of their community would prefer literacy in Gun to literacy in Fon. These findings suggest that Gen and Gun literacy, depending on the region, might be a workable solution for the literacy needs of the Xwla-speaking region provided there is adequate institutional support.

As stated above, the SIL strategy is to encourage the use of already developed language materials as widely as possible. In light of this, it appears that there is currently no need for SIL-related Xwla language development.
Appendices

Appendix A. Map of the Xwla language area

Figure 1: Map of the Xwela language area (based on Microsoft Corporation 2002)\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{a}The data contained in this map represent the perceptions of the Xwla informants and have not been otherwise confirmed (see also Appendix B ‘Population’).
# Appendix B. Population

Table 2: Population figures for the Xwla communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65,679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Atlantique département

- **Abomey-Calavi s.-p.**
  - Godomé u.c.
    - Houalacomey* 4484

- **Cotonou district**
  - Placodji u.c.
    - Placodji-Plage* 3854
  - Sodjatinme u.c.
    - Enagnon* 8986

### Ouidah s.-p.

- **Avlékété r.c.**
  - Adounko* 711
  - Avlékété* 954
  - Ahouandji* 897

- **Djègbadj r.c.**
  - Djègbadj* 1223
  - Djondji* 532

### Mono département

- **Grand-Popo s.-p.**
  - Adjaha r.c.
    - Adjaha 1096
    - Coho 397
    - Cotocoli* 273
    - Ayiguinnou* 1130
    - Nicoué-Condji* 438
    - Zogbédi* 583

- **Avlo r.c.**
  - Allago 258
  - Avlo-Centre 456
  - Avlo-Plage 265
  - Hakoué 1004
  - Hounkounnou – not listed –
  - Kouanta 341
  - Kpeko 549

- **Grand-Popo u.c.**
  - Agonmekanmè 1057

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a The following population totals are taken from the 1992 Benin Census data (Ministère du Plan 1994 b,c,d). (See also Section 2.2 ‘Language area.’)

b s.-p. = ‘sous-préfecture’, r.c. = rural commune, u.c. = urban circumscription, (*): a location only partially Xwla-speaking, according to at least some of the informants.
Appendix B: Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ewé-Condji*</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbecon</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hévé</td>
<td>1136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houndjohoundji</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hounsoukoe</td>
<td>1297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onkouihoué</td>
<td>1243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yodo-Condji*</td>
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</table>

**Ouémé département**

**Sèmè-Kpodji s.-p.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agblangandan r.c.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agblangandan*</td>
<td>1809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dego – not listed –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadjakome</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokokoukoumè*</td>
<td>2567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Aholouyémè r.c.**

| Kétonou             | 4450      |

**Ekpè r.c.**

| Glégbonou           | 3672      |
| Djeffa               | 597       |
| Ekpè I               | 2200      |
| Ekpè II              | 3665      |
| Ekpè III             | 3319      |

**Sèmè-Kpodji u.c.**

| Agongo               | 1538      |
| Kpodji               | 1801      |
| Sèmè-Kpodji          | 4166      |
| Sèmè-Plage – not listed – | |
Appendix C. Lexical similarity

The following percentage and variance matrixes for lexical similarity were computed by the computer program WORDSURV (Version 2.4 – Wimbish 1989). The program performs a count of shared vocabulary between lists based on similarity groupings, as determined by the researcher. Thus it does not apply a linguistic comparative method to the data and therefore does not determine cognates based on historical analysis.

The Gbe word lists were analyzed according to two different sets of criteria with both computations following the principles described by Blair (1990:30–33), allowing for a few modifications though as outlined by Kluge (1997). For the first computation, morphemes that are apparently affixed to the form used in another variety are ignored if they occur always in the same position. For the second computation a stricter set of criteria is applied with morphemes apparently affixed to the form used in another variety being included in the analysis. 31

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31 See Kluge 1997 for further details as regards a preliminary evaluation of the analysis of word and phrase lists elicited for the current study.
### 1. Computation: Affixed morphemes are ignored

For this computation, morphemes that are apparently affixed to the form used in another variety are ignored if they always occur in the same position.

#### Table 3: Percentage matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Xwla (from Djeffa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 4: Variance matrix

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Xwla (from Djeffa)</th>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Xwla (from Adamé)</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8.7</td>
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<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
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<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Computation: Affixed morphemes are included

For this computation, morphemes that are apparently affixed to the form used in another variety are included in the analysis.

Table 5: Percentage matrix

|   | Gen | Fon | Gun | Tofin | Toli | Seto | Gen | Fon | Gun | Tofin | Toli | Seto | Gen | Fon | Gun | Tofin | Toli | Seto | Gen | Fon | Gun | Tofin | Toli | Seto |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|------|
| 53 | 68  | 76  | 68  | 69    | 78   | 51   | 65  | 65  | 61  | 66    | 61   | 52   | 59  | 58  | 52  | 54    | 55   | 69   | 60  | 74  | 66  | 67    | 70   | 69   | 68  | 72  | 64  | 65    | 68   | 66   |
| 55 | 71  |     |     |       |      | 58   | 72  | 64  | 61  | 65    | 68   | 64   | 77  | 75  | 70  | 72    | 76   | 72   | 78  | 86  | 75  | 63    | 75   | 66   | 63  | 75  | 66   | 75    | 66   | 75   |
| 45 | 71  | 75  |     |       |      | 54   | 67  | 67  | 61  | 61    | 62   | 54   | 77  | 75  | 70  | 72    | 76   | 72   | 78  | 86  | 75  | 63    | 75   | 66   | 63  | 75  | 66   | 75    | 66   | 75   |
| 45 | 73  | 72  | 76  | Toli  |      | 52   | 70  | 66  | 72  | 65    | 71   | 52   | 61  | 59  | 51  | 54    | 55   | 56   | 54  | 61  | 57  | 67    | 60   | 62   | 67  | 64  | 67   | 64    | 67   | 91   |
| 49 | 69  | 78  | 74  | 76    | Seto | 57   | 65  | 65  | 61  | 66    | 61   | 62   | 63  | 69  | 60  | 72    | 68   | 63   | 73  | 64  | 81    | 68   | 70   | 72   | 76   | 77   | 73   | 73   | 74   | 76   | 74   |

| Xwla (from Djeffa) | 48  | 75  | 73  | 67    | 70   | 69   | 68  | 72  | 65    | 71   | 51   | 65  | 65  | 61  | 66   | 70   | 57   | 65  | 61    | 67   | 66   | 75   | 68   | 76   | 74   |
| Alada             | 60  | 74  | 74  | 66    | 67    | 70   | 69  | 68  | Kotafon | 58   | 72  | 64  | 61  | 65    | 68   | 64   | 77  | 75    | 70   | 72    | 76   | 72   | 78    | 86   | 75    | 63   | 75   | 66   | 75    | 66   | 75   |
| Ayizo            | 66  | 63  | 75  | Tofin | 64   | 77  | 75  | 70    | 72    | 76   | 72   | 78  | 86  | 75    | 63   | 75   | 66   | 75    | 63   | 75    | 66   | 75    | 63   | 75    | 66   | 75    | 63   | 75    | 66   | 75    |
| Gbokpa           | 65  | 61  | 73  | 71    | 61   | 62   | 65   | 61  | 73    | 61   | 79   | Gbési | 54   | 67  | 61    | 62   | 65   | 61    | 73   | 61    | 79   | 67    | 72    | 68   | 76    | 74   |
| Xwla             | 52  | 70  | 66  | 72    | 65    | 71   | 68   | 63  | 73    | 64    | 81   | 68  | 70   | Xwla (from Adamé) | 56   | 59  | 58  | 52    | 54    | 56   | 54  | 61    | 57    | 67   | 60  | 66   | 76   | 67   | 72   | 67   | 72    | 67   | 91   | 74   |

Table 6: Variance matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Fon</th>
<th>Gun</th>
<th>Tofin</th>
<th>Toli</th>
<th>Seto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Xwla (from Djeffa)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Alada</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Ayizo</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D. Community questionnaire

(rév. 11/98, SIL Togo/Benin)

Effectué le ______________ à __________________ par ______________________

Identité ethnique du chef: _______________; des vieux: ________________

Abréviations:
   Xl = Xwla, Aj = Aja, Ay = Ayizo, E = Ewe, F = Fon, Fr = Français, Ge = Gen, Gu = Gun, R = Raxe, Sx = Saxwe, Se = Se, Xe = Xwela, O = oui, N = non

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

1.1. Comment vous appelez votre propre langue?

1.2. 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. (En utilisant les feutres en couleur)

1.3. Dans quels villages est votre langue (xwla) parlée? (demandez pour chaque village)
   (Encerclez les villages où la langue se parle; mettez des parenthèses autour des noms des villages où il n’est pas certain que la langue se parle.)

1.4. Est-ce qu’il y a des villages où plusieurs langues sont parlées?
   (Encadrez les villages où des locuteurs de plusieurs langues différentes se trouvent.)

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

2. DIALECTES DE LA LANGUE ENQUETEE ET INTERCOMPREHENSION ENTRE LES VARIANTES

2.1. Parmi les villages où votre langue (xwla) est parlée, où est-ce qu’ils parlent exactement comme vous?

2.2. Dans quels villages est-ce qu’ils parlent un peu différemment, mais vous les comprenez quand même?

2.3. Dans quels villages est-ce qu’ils parlent très différemment?

2.4. Est-ce qu’il y a des dialectes de xwla? O N
   (Selon les renseignements fournis par l’enquêté, l’enquêteuse(eur) devrait
   − mettre la lettre A à côté des villages qui parlent la langue de l’enquête, B à côté des villages d’un autre groupe, C, et ainsi de suite;
   − tracer les lignes des frontières dialectales avec les lignes continues et pointillées.)
2.5. Comment appelle-t-on les gens qui parlent:

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

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

Variety A – B: _________________________________________________________
Variety A – C: _________________________________________________________
Variety A – D: _________________________________________________________
Variety A – E: _________________________________________________________

2.7. Quelle variété avez-vous le plus de difficulté à comprendre? ___________________________

2.8. Laquelle comprenez-vous la plus facilement? ___________________________

2.9. Est-ce que tous les enfants ici au village comprennent bien les locuteurs ...?

A  B  C  D
O  N  O  N  O  N  O  N

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

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

2.12. Où parle-t-on votre langue le mieux?

3. LES RAPPORTS AVEC DES AUTRES LANGUES

3.1. Quelles autres langues se ressemblent à votre langue?

Aj  Ay  E  F  Ge  Gu  R  Se  Sx  Xe  Autres_______
(Sondez les autres possibilités)

3.2. Est-ce vous avez jamais parlé avec quelqu’un de:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aj</th>
<th>Ay</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ge</th>
<th>Gu</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Se</th>
<th>Sx</th>
<th>Xe</th>
<th>Autres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Quelle langue est-ce que vous comprenez le mieux?  

3.4. Quelle langue est-ce que vous comprenez le pire?
3.5. Est-ce qu’un enfant de six ans de ce village (nommez le nom du village) peut comprendre le fon? O N

3.6. le gen? O N

3.7. le gun? O N

3.8. Sinon, quand il grandit, à quel âge comprendrait-t-il

le fon? ________ le gen?__________ le gun?_________

4. L’USAGE DE LA LANGUE/VARIANTE

4.1. La majorité de la population ici sont de quelle langue? _________ Les minorités? ______

4.2. Est-ce qu’il y a des mariages mixtes? O N Si oui, avec qui? ______________________

La plupart des mariages mixtes sont avec des locuteurs de quelle langue? _______________

4.3. Quelle langue est-ce que vous utilisez pour:

Annonces dans le village XI F Ge Gu ___
Rites de coutumes XI F Ge Gu ___
Judgements dans la famille XI F Ge Gu ___
Judgements au village XI F Ge Gu ___
Conseils d’anciens (au village) XI F Ge Gu ___
Réunions du conseil traditionnel (régionales) XI F Ge Gu ___

4.4. A part votre langue, quelle langue est utilisée le plus souvent ici dans votre village? ______

et dans la région? __________________________________________________________________

5. ALPHABETISATION

5.1. Est-ce qu’il y a des classes d’alphabétisation au village? O N

Dans quelle(s) langue(s)? ________________________________________________

Ça se passe combien de fois par an? _______________________________________

Est-ce qu’il y a des classes d’alphabétisation dans la région? O N

Dans quelle(s) langue(s)? ________________________________________________

Ça se passe combien de fois par an? _______________________________________

5.2. Est-ce que vous avez jamais vu quelque chose écrit en xwla? O N __________

5.3. Est-ce que vous connaissez quelqu’un qui écrit en xwla? O N __________
5.4. Si on irait commencer un programme d’alphabétisation est-ce que les gens d’ici vont-ils s’intéresser et s’inscrire pour la classe:

si c’était en fon? O N ________________________________
et si c’était en gen? O N ________________________________
et si c’était en gun? O N ________________________________
et si c’était en xwla? O N ________________________________

6. INFORMATION GENERALE SUR LA COMMUNAUTE

6.1. Est-ce qu’il y a des églises ici? O N ________________________________

Si oui, quelle langue est utilisée pour:
la prédication/l’homélie? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
pour les chants? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
les prières? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
les annonces? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
les réunions de prière ou des autres rendez-vous? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___

6.2. Est-ce qu’il y a des mosquées ici? O N ________________________________

Si oui, quelle langue est utilisée pour:
la prédication/l’enseignement? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
interpréter la lecture du Coran? Xl  F  Ge  Gu  ___
Appendix E. **Non-formal education questionnaire**

(rév. 11/98, SIL Togo/Benin)

Effectué le _____________ à ____________________ par _____________

1. **PRESENTATION DE L’ENQUETE**

1.1. Nom et fonction:

1.2. Langue maternelle:

1.3. Parlez-vous le xwla? O N

2. **INFORMATIONS DEMOGRAPHIQUES**

A. **ALPHABETISATION**

2.1. Des classes d’alphabétisation dans la région xwla sont organisées dans quelles langues?

Distribution des langues par région

2.2. Existe-t-il des classes d’alphabétisation en langue xwla? O N

Depuis quand?

2.3. Nombre des classes et le totale des étudiants par sous-préfecture

   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)

2.4. Lesquels sont vos projets pour l’avenir en ce qui concerne l’utilisation de xwla pour l’alphabétisation?

B. **POST-ALPHABETISATION**

2.5. Existe-t-il des classes de post-alphabétisation en langue xwla? O N

Depuis quand?

Elles existent en quelle(s) autre(s) langue(s) dans la région xwla?

2.6. Nombre des classes et le totale des étudiants par sous-préfecture

   a)
   b)
   c)
   d)
2.7. Quelle sorte de programme?

3. LA LANGUE UTILISÉE POUR L’ALPHABÉTISATION

3.1. Quels syllabaires sont utilisés pour les classes?
   Développés par qui?
   Quelle orthographe?

3.2. Quelle variante est utilisée pour les classes d’alphabétisation?
   Médium d’instruction:
   Langue écrite:

3.3. Existe-t-il des problèmes de compréhension de cette variante parmi les étudiants?  O  N
   Lesquels? _________________________________________________________________

3.4. Selon vous, est-ce que le choix de cette variante est capable de servir les locuteurs xwla le meilleur?  O  N
   Si non, quelle variante devrait être choisie pour l’alphabétisation?

3.5. Existe-t-il des problèmes de lecture avec cette orthographe?  O  N
   Lesquels? _________________________________________________________________

3.6. Quelle orthographe est la meilleure?
Appendix F. Church questionnaire

(rev 11/98, SIL Togo/Benin)

Effectué le ______________ à ____________________ par _____________

Dénomination: ________________________________________________

Abréviations:

Xl = Xwla, Aj = Aja, Ay = Ayizo, E = Ewe, F = Fon, Fr = Français, Ge = Gen, Gu = Gun, R = Raxe, Sx = Saxwe, Se = Se, Xe = Xwela, O = oui, N = non

1. PRESENTATION DE L’ENQUETE

1.1. Nom, fonction dans l’église, langue maternelle: Est-ce que vous parlez xwla?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nom et fonction</th>
<th>langue maternelle</th>
<th>parle la langue locale?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>___________________</td>
<td>________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>___________________</td>
<td>________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. INFORMATION GENERALE

2.1. La majorité au village est de quelle religion?

Musulman  Chrétien  Animiste  autre ________________

2.2. Il y a quelles églises au village? ____________________________________________

2.3. Quelles églises sont les plus grandes? __________________________________________

3. L’USAGE DE LA LANGUE A L’ÉGLISE

3.1. Quelles langues sont-elles utilisées pendant le culte/la messe pour:

- prêcher XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- les annonces XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- lire les écritures XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- l’eucharistie/la sainte cène XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- prières (des dirigeants) XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- prières (des paroissiens) XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
- les chants/la louange XI  E  Fr  F  Ge  Gu
3.2. (chez les catholiques) Qui lit le lectionnaire pendant la messe?  
Dans quelle(s) langue(s)?  
Est-ce qu’il y a parfois des problèmes à la lire?  
Est-ce que la lecture est bien comprise par tout le monde?  

3.3. Quelle(s) langue(s) est(ont) utilisée(s) pour:  
– la réunion des femmes  
– le groupe de jeunesse  
– les témoignages  
– les prières pendant les études bibliques  
– l’école dominicale  

3.4. Quelle Bible est utilisée à l’église?  

3.5. Dans votre congrégation combien de personnes 
possèdent leurs propres Bibles?  
très peu | plusieurs | moitié | majorité  

3.6. Est-ce qu’il existe du matériel religieux en xwla?  
Lesquelles?  

3.7. Est-ce qu’il y a des responsables xwla dans cette église?  
Ils prêchent dans quelle langue?  

3.8. Donnez-vous parfois une traduction préparée ou spontanée en xwla:  
Pourquoi?  

4. ENGAGEMENT POTENTIEL DE L’ÉGLISE  

4.1. Est-ce que l’utilisation de xwla est encouragée par les responsables de cette église:  
pour le culte/la messe?  
pour les réunions différentes?  
Lesquelles?  

4.2. Est-ce que vous croyez que l’utilisation de xwla serait impropre pour le culte/la messe?  
Si oui, pour quelle raison?  

4.3. Est-ce que les membres de votre église ont exprimé leur intérêt  
– de lire et écrire en xwla?  
– d’avoir du matériel religieux en xwla?  

4.4. Est-ce qu’il y a quelqu’un qui aide actuellement les gens qui 
sont engagés à un projet ou un programme de développement, etc.?  

Appendix G. RA-RTT narratives

1. Fon RA-RTT

The following lines are in Fon, interlinear French and standard French.

1. hwenu e un do kpɛ ví á, un nɔ kplá tɔ ce yi gle ta.
   Moment que je être petit je accompagne père mon aller champ sur.
   Quand j’étais petit j’accompagne mon père au champ.

   un nɔ yi xwa gbɛ xú e.
   Je vais sarcler herbe avec lui.

2. enj mĩ xwa gbɛ fó ș, è je hwelekó ș, cóbónú mĩ nã leko yi
   Si nous sarcler herbe terminer, il arriver après-midi avant que nous futur retourner
   Quand nous finissons le sarclage, dans l’après-midi avant de rentrer

   xwɛ gbe ș, mĩ mɛ yɔkϯvú lɛɛ, mĩ dɔ fɛca kpeví kpeví dɛ lɛɛ bó nɔ dɔ,
   aller maison dans, nous petit plur., nous tendre piège petit petit plur.
   à la maison, nous les enfants,

   bó nɔ dɔ wlí afin, ogbɛja ná dɔ gle mɛ.
   et tendre et pour attraper souris rat avec être champs dans.
   nous tendons de petits pièges pour attraper des souris, des rats.

   énỳí dɔ j lɛ mĩ dɔ ș, mĩ wã gle ta zãnzãn ș, mĩ nɔ yi kpóñ.
   Si nous tendre, nous venir champ sur matin, nous aller voir.
   Si nous tendons les pièges, le matin quand nous revenons au champ, nous les contrôlons.

3. è wà je gbe ɖɔkpó bɔ un dɔ fɛca ce.
   Il arriver tomber jour un et je tendre piège mon.
   Un jour, j’ai tenu mon piège.

   un mɔ dɔ afin wà ɖũ finlûnyɛ dɔ fĩ ɖɛ, bó dɔ fɛca ș dɔ fĩnɛ
   Je vu que souris venir manger manioc être endroit et tendre piège le là endroit
   J’ai constaté que les souris ont mangé le manioc sans un endroit et j’ai tendu là mon piège
bó blá finlínnye kpeví d'éj; hûn afin we un dò féca 3 ná.
et attaché manioc petit un sur donc souris c'est je tendre piège le pour
et attaché un petit morceau de manioc là-dessus;

4. gbe éné gbe 3, sìbigbe we, gbadanu, bó éé un dò féca 3, mî wâ yi xwé,
Jour ce jour samedi c'est, soir et lorsque je tendre piège le, nous venir aller maison
C'était un samedi soir, quand j'ai tendu le piège nous sommes retournés à la maison

be je aklunzângbe zânzân bó nyí dòkkôngo só nû bó wá
et il tomber seigneur jour matin et moi seul apprêter
et le dimanche matin, je suis parti seul (dans le champ)

xwe yi gbe féca ce kpol gbé. aklunzângbe 3, medèbû leèn nó wá gleta â.
et venir aller aller pièce mon regarder. Seigneur jour personne ne venir champ sur
pour aller regarder le piège. Le dimanche personne ne va au champ.

5. hûn nyí dòkkôngo géé we só nû bó yi gle 5 ta, bó ná yi kpol féca ce bó nû wá yi.
Donc moi seul c'est apprêter et aller champ le sur, pour aller regarder pièce mon
Donc je suis allé seul au champ pour aller regarder le piège pour revenir

xwé nû e gbé un tón kpowun é jên né,
maison. Chose que je sortir seulement – ça
à la maison. Voilà le seul but que j'ai visé.

6. bó éé un yi gle 5 ta 3, un mlé odogbô
et lorsque je aller champ le sur, je suivre frontière
Arrivée dans le champ, j'ai pris par la frontière sur

e j un dò féca 5 dò 3, bó dò jini we. éè un sekpol féca
rel sur je tendre pièce le – et être aller c'est. Lorsque je approcher piège
laquelle j'ai tendu le piège. Lorsque je m'approche du piège

iéndo 3, bó kpol sédé lè kpowun 3, azèxe jén un ko mɔ dɔ
le aussitôt, et regarder de loin aussitôt seulement, sorcellerie-oiseau je déjà vu être
je l'ai regardé de loin, à une grande surprise, j'ai vu un hibou
fɛca ce j nukún kloolo duu,
piège mon sur œil “kloolo duu”
sur mon piège, avec des yeux gros, arrondis (assortis),

7. bo xesí dì mì bɔ un hɔn dɔ un kpo dɔ vù; nukún tɔn ɔ, é kló dîn,
et peur ressembler moi et je fuir, car je encore être petit; œil son – il gros trop
j’ai pris peur et j’ai pris la fuite parce que je suis encore petit, ses yeux sont trop gros,
un no se azëxe xo, amɔ un mɔ eédéépré mɔ kpɔn gbedé ɔ;
je entendre sorcellerie-oiseau parole mais je voir clairement ainsi jamais négatif;
j’entends parler d’hibou mais je ne l’ai jamais vu correctement,

8. nukɔn nukɔntɔn ɔ ne un mɔ né, bɔ nukún tɔn dɔ duu dɔ fɛca ɔ j.
premièrement cela, je voir là, et œil son être “duu” être piège le sur
c’est pour ma première fois et ses yeux sont assortis sur le piège.
é bɛ afɔ tɔn we lea dɔ fɛca ɔ me, bɔ dɔ fɛca ɔ j dɔ te lè;
Il ramasser patte son deux piège le dans et être piège le sur être debout
Il a mis ses deux pattes dans le piège, et il est debout sur le piège,
êe un mɔ mɔɔ, un hɔn, bo je sèsóséɛsɔ j;
lorsque je voir ainsi je fuir et commencer trembler –
lorsque je vois ça j’ai pris la fuite et je commence à trembler

9. bɔ un dɔ xe élɔɔ, jɔ un ká ná jɔ dɔ a? un dɔ ná hu i jen we hùn.
et je dire oiseau ce laisser je laisser ques je devoir fut tuer le obliger
et j’ai dit cet oiseau, faut-il le laisser? Mais je does quand même le tuer.
Nɛ un ná wà gbɔu? nye dɔkɔpɔnɔ gëɛ we dɔ gle ɔ ta fì.
c’est donc comment je? faire Moi seule c’est être champ le sur ici
Qu’est-ce que je vais faire? Je suis seul ici dans le champ.

10. énɛ ɔ, un wà yi gbo kpo, kpo gaga dè bɔ un sixú kpɔn nukún tɔn mɛ ɔ.
Alors je venir aller couper bâton bâton long un et je pouvoir regarder œil son dans neg
Alors je suis parti chercher un long bâton, et je ne peux pas regarder son visage.
Il est debout être piège le sur et regarder chose oeil “duu”
Mais il est debout sur le piège et il regarde avec des yeux assortis,

11. bòné 5, nyi ló un dò ko zo; un dò ko ce zo bò dò féca 5 kò
et ainsi moi aussi je tourner cou loin je tourner cou mon loin et être piège le près de
alors moi aussi j’ai tourné mon regard ailleurs et je m’approche du piège

yi we dèdè, dèdè, bò un nò fini kpòn blèwun, un nò fin kpòn bò
allier c’est doucement doucement et je voler le regarder vite je voler le regarder et
très très doucement, j’essaie de l’épiller (je ne le fixe pas), lorsque je suis

dée un sekpó é gángi kpowun 5, un bò kpo 5 dò n ì;
lorsque je approcher lui bien seulement je rouer bâton lui
bien proche de lui, je lui donne des coups,

12. un dò kpo 5 é. kúká nú un ná dò we, atòn kpowun 5, é nyí kɔyɔɔ, bò nukún,
je taper bâton le lui avant que je taper deux, trois seulement, il être écrouler et oeil
je lui ai donné des coups. À peine il a reçu un ou deux coups, ils’est écroulé, et ses yeux

5 bû bò un dò éé né, un hu lan égbe.
le disparaître et je dire voilà je tuer viande aujourd’hui
sont fermés et j’ai dit voilà “très bien” j’ai tué un gibier aujourd’hui.

13. éé é kú nò 5 nukún 5 bodó, bò un wá yi féca 5 kò bò ke bò
lorsque il mourir ainsi oeil le fermer et je venir aller pièce le près de et ouvrir et
Quand il est mort comme ça ses yeux se ferment (reserrer), je m’approche du piège, je
l’ouvre,

dée e sín me bó jò féca 5 myi do 5 nu finé, bò zé wá yi xwé;
enlever le dedans et laisser pièce le être trou le bord là et prendre venir aller maison
je le sors et j’ai abandonné le piège à la place et j’emporte mon gibier à la maison

un zé wa yi
je prendre aller venir
j’emporte mon gibier à la maison
14. xwé ŋ un wá yi mò noví ce lec bo mì sun, mì sun bĩ bó bó,
maison, je venir aller voir frère mon pl et nous déplumer, nous déplumer tout et et
Quand je l’amène à la maison, j’ai vu mes frères et nous l’avons déplumé, nous l’avons
complètement déplumer.

ḍa ḍu bo lan tɔn víví ḍésú.
préparer manger et viande son doux beaucoup
Nous l’avons préparé, et sa viande est très douce.

amɔ nɔ ḍé yí tɔ sɔ bó ḍɔ lé tɔ cémí ná dó wɔ nǔ ná.
Mais homme un recevoir tête et dire que tête le lui avec faire chose avec.
Mais un homme a pris sa tête, il a dit qu’il va faire gris-gris avec la tête.

15. mì dɛɛ lea ḍu tɔ sɔ ʒ; amɔ nɔ ɛ kpo ḍɔ wʉtu tɔn bó kpo lea bũ s,
Nous autres manger tête non; mais chose qui reste corps son et rester plu tout,
Nous n’avons pas mangé la tête, mais nous avons mangé tout le reste;

mì ḍu;ɛ víví sin gɔn.+
nous manger; il doux eau bien
Il est très succulent.

16. lẹe un hu azɛxe gbɔn s, ṑe nɛ, bɔ un flín lɛ s,
comment je touer sorcellerie-oiseau ainsi, voilà, et je rappeler aussitôt,
Voilà comment j’ai tué un hibou. Chaque fois je me rappele cette histoire,

é nɔ hwɛn nú mì kàkà bɔ un nɔ ko, ḍɔ ée un mɔ e s, xesì e ḍì mì é
il rire pour moi tellement et je rire, car lorsque je voir lui, peur qui ressembler moi,
ça me paraît ridicule et je ris (même) parce que quand je l’ai vu j’ai pris peur

syɛn bɔ un nɔ sœsœ ḍɔ te, bɔ un ka ḍɔ dandand me s, un ka ná hu.
il est et je trembler debout, et je dire obligatoirement, je fut tuer
et j’ai tremblé. Mais j’ai dit que je dois forcément le tuer.

17. hùn sànnu s, súnnu jën nyí.
Donc garçon le, garçon effectif être
Donc il n’y a pas un homme petit; l’homme est l’homme.
Il non être garçon force c’est je taper je laisser oiseau le être piège le dans
Si je ne mets pas en jeu la force d’un homme (si je n’agit en tant qu’homme), je vais laisser l’oiseau dans le piège

bô é sixû wà zòn yi
et il pouvoir avenir voler aller
et il peut s’envoler.

hûn lë un hu azëxe gôn ô nê.
donc ainsi je tuer sorcellerie-oiseau ainsi
Donc voilà comment j’ai tué un hibou.
2. **Gen RA-RTT**

The following lines are in Gen, interlinear French and standard French.

Akpeje be funkpekpe wo  
Akpeje de souffrances les  
Les souffrances d’Akpeje

1. **Nyɔnuvi ṣe tɔna Akpeje. E lè axwe kudo etɔ a ènɔ a**  
   Une jeune fille s'appelait akpeje. Elle était à la maison avec son père, sa mère,  

   **Une jeune fille s'appelait akpeje. Elle était à la maison avec son père, sa mère,**

2. **Gbakudo nɔvia nyɔnu wo. Epè nyi kpɔ ye be ᵃ.**  
   Avec ses soeurs ses ans huit seulement c'est elle a  

   **Avec ses soeurs ses ans huit seulement c'est elle a,**

   Akpeje be amɛ woa wamɛnɔ ye wo nyi  
   Akpeje de parents les pauvres que ils sont  

   **Akpeje de parents les pauvres que ils sont,**

3. **Gbɛ ṣekaa, nyɔnu jè tugbe ᵃ so Lome, va pɔnupo na ebe amɛ wo**  
   Un jour, une dame est venue de Lomé parler à ses parents  

   **Un jour, une dame est venue de Lomé parler à ses parents,**

   **Un jour, une dame est venue de Lomé parler à ses parents,**  
   **Un jour, une dame est venue de Lomé parler à ses parents,**  

   **Un jour, une dame est venue de Lomé parler à ses parents,**  

   Gbɛn na wo be: “Mù kpɔ be ᵃevi wo be hɛnɛn le ᵃefunna mi  
   en leur disant: “Je vois que vous avez des difficultés à garder vos enfants.**

4. **E wɔna mù be Akpeje bi nywɛde. Ehlɔn nyɛ ᵃeka ke ałɔnɔ nyɔna**  
   Il me semble que Akpeje est très éveillée. Une de mes amies qui est riche,  

   **Il me semble que Akpeje est très éveillée. Une de mes amies qui est riche,**

   **Il me semble que Akpeje est très éveillée. Une de mes amies qui est riche,**

   **Il me semble que Akpeje est très éveillée. Une de mes amies qui est riche,**

   **Il me semble que Akpeje est très éveillée. Une de mes amies qui est riche,**

   a teŋu xɔ ᵇ la kpɔ e ku mi. Nenɛ agbɔn la ᵃekpɔtɔ na mi  
   à peu prendre elle va veiller sur avec vous. Ainsi charge va diminuer pour vous  

   **À peu prendre elle va veiller sur avec vous. Ainsi charge va diminuer pour vous,**

   **À peu prendre elle va veiller sur avec vous. Ainsi charge va diminuer pour vous,**

   **À peu prendre elle va veiller sur avec vous. Ainsi charge va diminuer pour vous,**

   **À peu prendre elle va veiller sur avec vous. Ainsi charge va diminuer pour vous,**
eye miabe vi la gba xo kpakpla nyweqe le funu.
et votre enfant va encore prendre éducation bon là-bas
et votre enfant recevra en plus une bonne éducation là-bas.

Akpeje be ame wo xogbe eye nyenu a kplc e yi Lome.
Akpeje les gens Pl accepter et femme la amener la aller Lome.
Les parents d’Akpeje ont accepté et la femme l’a emmenée à Lomé.

Lè ébé axwe yeyea mea, Akpeje wona do so ñudeken me kaka
Dans sa maison nvele dans, Akpeje fait travail depuis matin dans jusqu’à
Dans sa nouvelle maison, Akpeje travaille du matin jusque

yi zan me. E wona enu kewo kpata wo Donna e a nyweqe;
aller nuit dans Elle fait chose que tout on demande à elle bien;
dans la nuit. Elle fait bien tout ce qu’on lui demande de faire.

5. ñaa ebe nwowc ñekpekpe mu jena ame kewo gbo be lea to ji ò.
mais ses actes aucun ne plait aux gens qui chez elle est eux sur Neg.
Mais, rien de ce qu’elle fait ne plait à ceux chez qui elle se trouve.

Wo zonna e gasyagame; gbà pona e.
Ils insultent elle tout le temps; aussi frappe elle.
Ils l’insultent tout le temps et la frappe aussi.

6. Gbè ñekaa, é hwe biene le adj ke Akpeje sanaa be
jour un il manque vingt francs dans savon que Akpeje vend
Un jour, il a manqué vingt francs du prix de vente des savons qu’elle vend

gà me. Wo po e ku ataŋu bla e kudo kulanka na eŋukeke ñeka
argent dans. Ils frappé elle avec cravache attaché l’ avec fil de fer pour journée une.
Ses tuteurs l’ont battue avec une cravache. Ils l’ont attachée avec du fil de fer pendant un jour

Akpeje sè veve lè lan me, gba sè veve lè ji me.
Akpeje senti douleur -- corps dans encore senti douleur -- coeur dans
Akpeje a souffert dans son corps et dans son âme.
7. Elle vit son village dans de personne garçon une est là où elle était jour un. Elle vit un jour, un homme de son village dans le quartier où elle se trouvait. Elle prit maison lequel dans elle restait -- montrer lui demandant instamment -- montrer lui demandant instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instampton instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment instamment inst%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%

8. Peu de temps après Akpeje son père venu. Il dit seulement Peu de temps après, le père d’Akpeje est venu. Il a simplement dit

be Akpeje ɗo la trɔ yi axwe eye wo la wɔ nudiante wo na e. que Akpeje doit retourner maison. et on va faire choses certaines à elle. qu’elle doit retourner au village pour qu’on lui fasse quelques cérémonies.

9. Depuis ce temps, au village, Akpeje ses parents disent aux gens autres Depuis ce temps, dans le village, les parents d’Akpeje exhortent tous les autres

kpata be: “Miabe vi wo nɛ nɔ mìa gbɔ. Wo mu kplana wo nywɛạ le du gan wo mɛ ð. autres en leur disant: “Gardez vos enfants chez vous. On ne les éduque pas bien

villes grandes les dans Neg. dans les grandes villes.
3. **Gun RA-RTT**

The following lines are in Gun, interlinear French and standard French.

1. có gbetógo, avún henaджi we, amǝ a ná gǝn.

\[\text{hélas ! } \text{‘homme appui,’ chien mordu toi, mais tu seras sauvé.}\]

Hélès ! Gbètògo, le chien t’a mordu, mais tu seras sauvé.

to gletoxo tokpókonǝ tǝn me, ovísúnnu ǝq tįn bo nɔ nyì gǝtògo. é ǝq oxwe cyanwe.
dans village tout pays rit dans, garçon un il y a et s’appelle Gbètògo. il a ans sept.
Dans le village de Tokpókonǝ, il y avait un garçon qui s’appelait Gbètògo. Il a sept ans.

2. otó étǝn je kpozǝn bo kú, ojle kpe٢é gódo, ye só ǝq nɔ ná onǝ étǝn
père son souffert lèpre et mort, temps un peu après, on encore a empoisonné mère sa
Son père a souffert de la lèpre et en est mort. Quelques temps après, on a empoisonné
encore sa mère

bǝ éwɔsù só kú gá. hwenenu, gbètògo ma só ǝq meqé ba.
et elle-même encore décédée. alors, Gbètògo n’a encore personne plus.
et elle même est morte. Alors, Gbètògo n’a plus aucun soutien.

3. nafǝ étǝn sosì wá yì i dó éqè de. bo nɔ kpènukûn é
tante maternelle sa ‘femme du tonnerre’ l’a accueilli auprès d’elle. et prend soin de
Sa tante maternelle Sossì l’a hébergé est prit soin de
go. gbètògo wá bè tòlivívé bo ényì xo tle gò e, é nɔ to dîndàn bo nɔ
lui. Gbètògo a attrapé désobéissance et si ventre même plein, il se promène et se
lui. Gbètògo a commencé par désobéir au point que même rassasié, il se
to gleme-gleme gbon. hwenenu, nafǝ étǝn wá gbêkɔ é go.
aller champs-champs á travers. alors, tante maternelle sa l’a négligée.
promenait partout dans les champs. En ce temps, sa tante maternelle l’a négligé.

4. gbeджkpò, nafǝ étǝn sosì zǝn e gali hlán dansi
un jour, tante maternelle sa Sossì commande lui gari vers ‘femme de serpent’
Un jour, sa tante maternelle Sossì lui a commandé du gari dans la maison de Dansi
Appendix G: RA-RTT narratives

xwé, madendó xwé yētōn gbe. é je aixo jí.
maison, non loin maison leur. il se mit en route.
non loin de leur maison. Il se mit en route.

5. é mō agān ḍé, é ná zé bo nyì. é mō atín ḍé, é ná xé.
il trouve caillou un, il le prend et lance. il trouve arbre un, il le grimpe.
Il trouve un caillou (éclat de poterie), il le jette. Il trouve un arbre, il le grimpe.

6. tlóló, avūn jema ḍé jánwe tónsón nūkanme, bo hēn-aqū
soudain, chien enragé un brusquement sortit brousse de, et mordu
Soudain, un chien enragé sortit brusquement de la brousse, et mordit

gbetógo són afɔ aqúsí.
Gbetógo au pied droit.

7. gbetógo bé axwá. é hōnwezun kpedé, é je-ayī, é ḍo: “có! có!
Gbetógo commencer crie. il courut un peu, il tomba, il dit: “hēlas! hēlas !
Gbetógo se mit à crier. Il courut un peu et il tombe, il dit: “Hēlas! Hēlas !
měnu we nā hwlēn mi són éxe sī !”
qui va sauver me de ceci !”
Qui va me sauver de ceci !

8. é to avīvī, é ma mō edēkōkōpē. afɔ étōn lō je jįį jį. tlóló, é ba ēdēme kpō.
il pleurait, il ne trouva personne. pied son dit se mit s’enfler. soudain, il s’évanouit.
Il pleurait, il ne trouva personne. Le dit pied se mit à s’enfler. Soudain, il s’évanouit.

9. međe jānwe tónsón nūkanme bo je é de bo nā e adagbígbó bo
une personne brusquement sortit brousse de et arriva il près de et donna lui courage
Une personne sortit brusquement de la brousse et arriva près de lui et lui donna courage

dqó alɔ é go bo ḍo: “gbetógo, un tīn to akpá ná we ! a ná gān dinvye.”
et le toucha et dit: “Gbetógo, je suis à côté à toi ! tu seras sauvé maintenant.”
et le toucha et dit: “Gbetógo, je suis à côté de toi ! Tu seras sauvé maintenant.”
10. me ló jeklo to akpá née bo dó ał́ òglo étǎn me bo ḗe
personne cette là se mit à genoux côté lui et mit main sac son dans et sortit
Cette personne s’agenouilla à côté de lui et mit la main dans son sac et sortit
amasin ḗéle tón.
médicaments certains dehors.
des caments.

11. è sá dó akpka ló me ná e bo ná e éxe nyí atín ḗé sin goto ḗo é ní
il l’appliqua dans plaie cette là à lui et donna lui ceci est bois un de écorce et dit lui
Il l’appliqua dans cette plaie à lui et lui donna une écorce d’un arbre lui disant de la
qu, bo é zé bo qu.
manger, et il prit et mangea.
manger, et il la prit et la mangea.

12. ojlè kpéqé gódo, é m̀ éqe me. tlóló, è nádó hun nukûn kpown, méxe
temps un peu après, il se retrouva. soudain, il pour ouvrir yeux simplement, celui
Un peu de temps après, il se retrouva. Soudain, avant qu’il n’ouvre les yeux, celui
wa m̀ néé ló, é ma s̀ m̀o me ló ba.
qui fait ainsi lui ce, il ne encore vu personne cette plus.
qui l’a sauvé, il ne retrouva plus cette personne.

13. afò étǎn xe ko jí ǹdí jíyí, afò goje afò tenme, bò gbètògo fòn.
pied son qui déjà enflé avant, pied retrouva forme initiale, et Gbètògo se leva.
Son pied qui s’était enflé se guérit et Gbètògo se releva.
è ḗènùdó m̀ ló, méxe é ma t̀ le s̀ m̀o.
il salua personne cette là, celui que il ne l’a même plus vu.
Il remercia cette personne, personne qu’il n’a même pas vu.
ènègódo, è wá yi x̀ wà gali ló.
après cela, il enfin alla acheter gari ce.
Après cela, il partit enfin acheter ce gari.
14. mes amis, orphelin père-mère les, vous savez que on ne les abandonne pas.

Mes amis, les orphelins de père et mère vous devez savoir qu’on ne les abandonne pas.

si ils même et désobéissent, vous devrez prendre soin d’eux, car père leur et mère
Même s’ils sont entrain de désobéir, vous devez prendre soin d’eux, car leur père et mère

leur qui sont partis pays morts, ils ne les abandonnent pas. nous saluons vous.
qui s’en sont allés au séjour des morts, ils ne les abandonnent pas. Nous vous saluons.
### Appendix H. RA-RTT results

Table 7: Comprehension levels for the Fon, Gen and Gun RA-RTTs across the tested communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Avlo Plage</th>
<th>Coho</th>
<th>Onkouihoué</th>
<th>Kétonou</th>
<th>Glégbonou</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fon</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good (MO) good – partial (MY, FO, FY)</td>
<td>good</td>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good (MO, MY FO) good – partial (FY)</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MO = older men; MY = younger men; FO = older women; FY = younger women
References


