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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for the person who has had 100-200 hours of language training in Kpelle, a language of Liberia. The text has six parts: (1) an introduction to the languages of Liberia, including charts and maps showing the distribution of African languages, the location of Liberian languages, and indications on the relatedness of the languages; (2) a lengthy instruction on a method of learning a language on one's own; (3) instructions for native language tutors; (4) a short reference grammar summarizing the basic grammatical structures in Kpelle; (5) a Kpelle-English dictionary; and (6) a description of the sound system of Mande languages and instructional material on learning the sound system of a language. (AMH)

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KPELLE

A Reference Handbook

of

PHONETICS, GRAMMAR, LEXICON

AND

LEARNING PROCEDURES

BY

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for

THE UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS

at

THE AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

of

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

Most language textbooks are written with a presumption that the language would be taught under the auspices of a trained and experienced language teacher. And while this situation does prevail in the teaching of European languages, such is not the case with the lesser-known languages of the third world, particularly outside the walls of higher learning.

In the learning of African languages, it is more frequently the case that language teachers are untrained (owing to the minimal demand for such teachers) or that the learning situation is outside the classroom. Although I have no access to statistics, my impression of Peace Corps language training is such that even with 100-200 hours of language training, the learner will need additional study before being able to use the language with any facility.

Thus, it is the reality that much of the learning of African languages will inevitably take place outside the classroom in situations that are in some ways ideal, but which lack an experienced language tutor. It is this reality that gives rise to this volume for it was written for the learner who has the commitment to further his/her language study, but who lacks the general knowledge of how to proceed. It is the purpose then to give the learner the sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to carry out the orderly study of a foreign language on his/her own.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF LIBERIA

In addition to English, which is widely spoken in Liberia, there are three major groups of languages spoken there: West Atlantic, Kru and Mande, all of which are subdivisions of the Niger-Congo branch of Niger-Kordofanian, the largest grouping of languages in Africa (see figure 1).

The Kru languages, spoken in both southern Liberia and the western part of the Ivory Coast, include the following Liberian languages: Krahn, Bassa, Kru, Grebo, Dei and Kuwaa (also known as Belleh). The West Atlantic languages are spoken from Liberia north to Senegal and include the Gola and Kissi, spoken in the northwestern and northern parts of Liberia respectively. These languages are virtually surrounded by languages of the third group known as the Mande languages. This group covers a much larger area than the other two, including not only the above-mentioned countries, but Guinea, Upper Volta and Mali as well.

The Mande languages have a Western branch and a (South)eastern branch. Mano and Gio (hard g) are Southeastern Mande languages spoken in Nimba county. The Western branch has two sub-branches, Northwestern and Southwestern. Both Vai, spoken in the Cape Mount area, and Manya (also known as Mandingo) spoken in the border area between Guinea and Liberia are Liberian languages of the northern branch. The other branch contains a set of very closely related languages called the Southwestern Mande languages of which only Loko is spoken outside of Liberia, in Sierra Leone. The rest, Mende, Bandi, Kpelle and Lorma are spoken in the northern part of Liberia.

The location of the Mande languages in Africa is shown in figure 1, the location of the languages of Liberia is shown in figure 2, and figure 3 shows how these languages are related.

FIGURE 1: THE DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

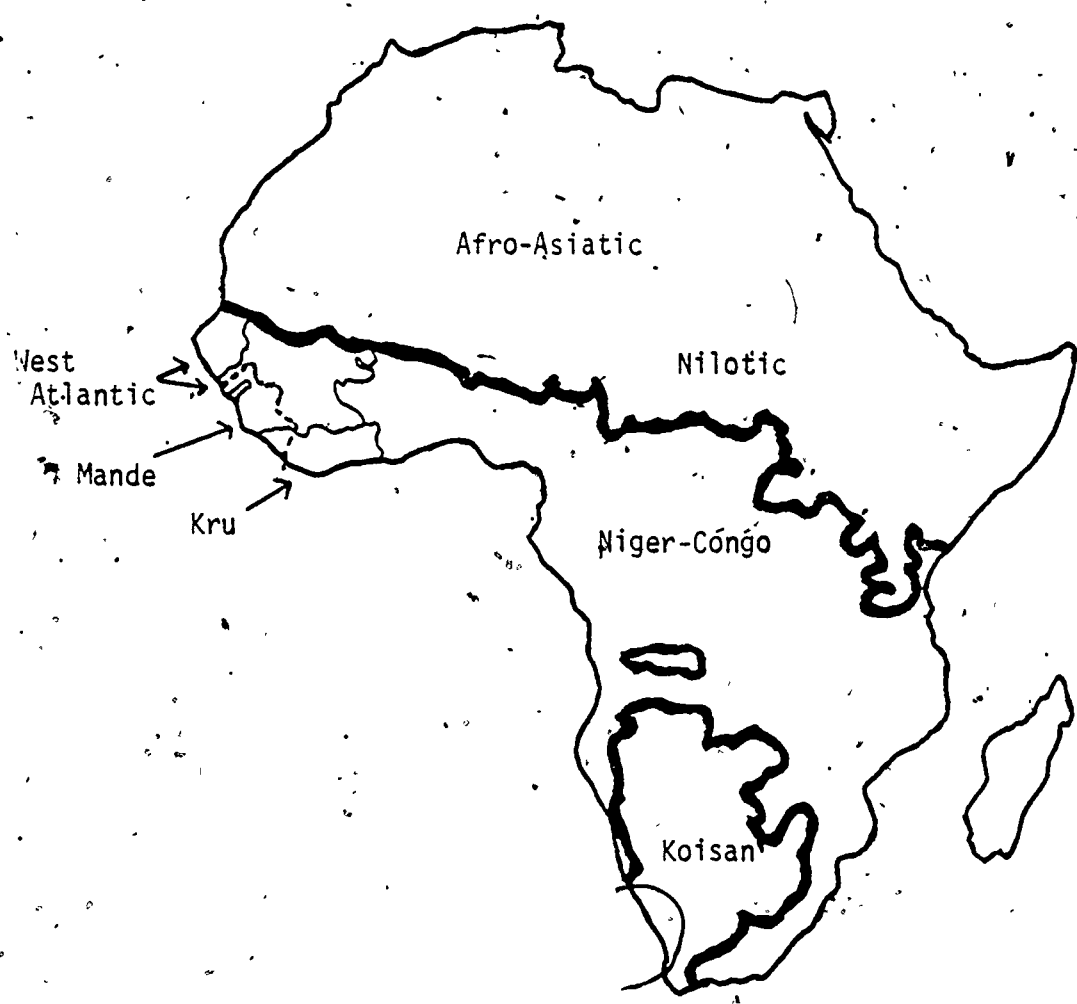


FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF LIBERIAN LANGUAGES
(from Liberia in Maps, von Gnielinski (ed. 1972))

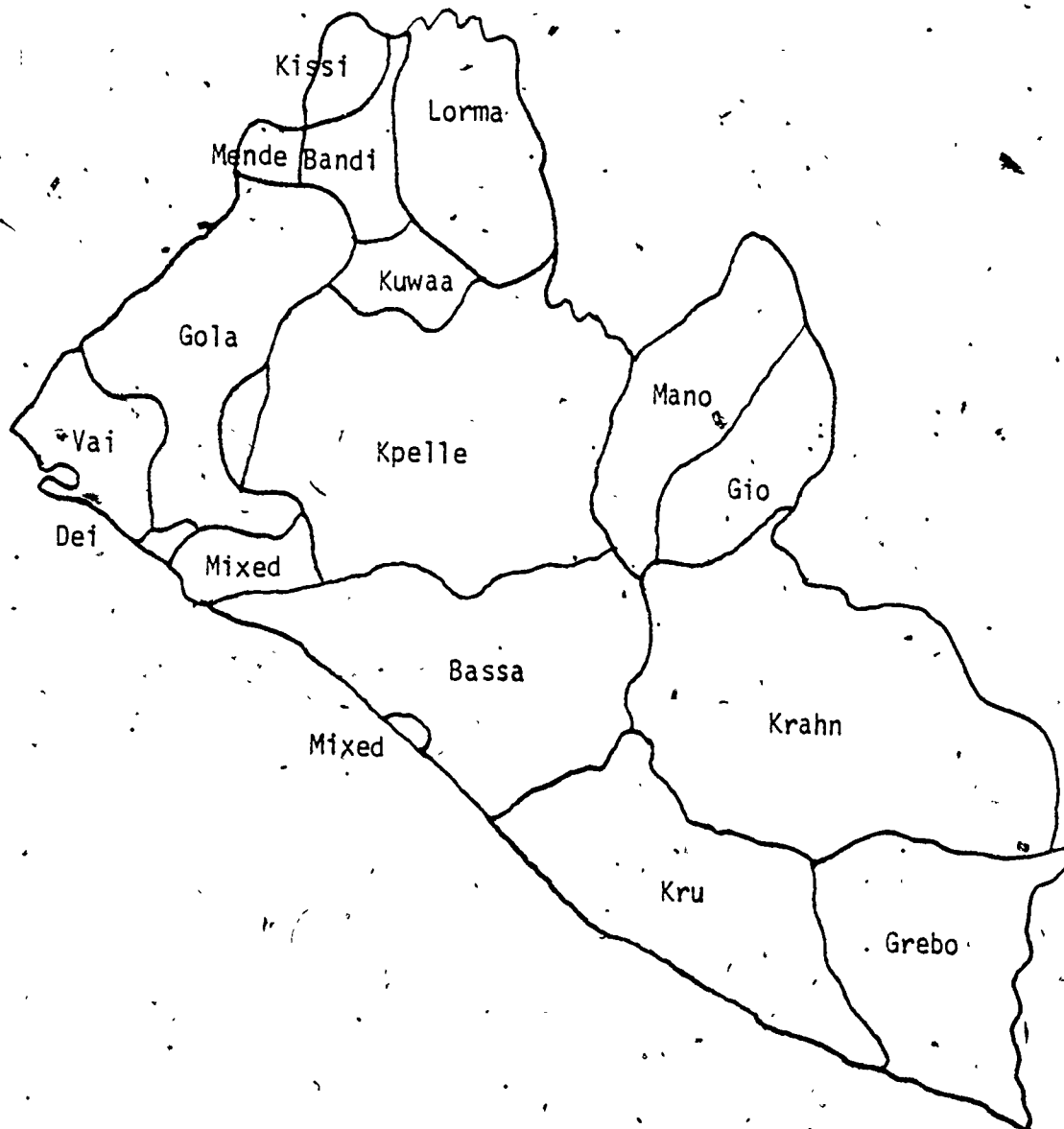


FIGURE 3: THE RELATEDNESS OF THE LIBERIAN LANGUAGES

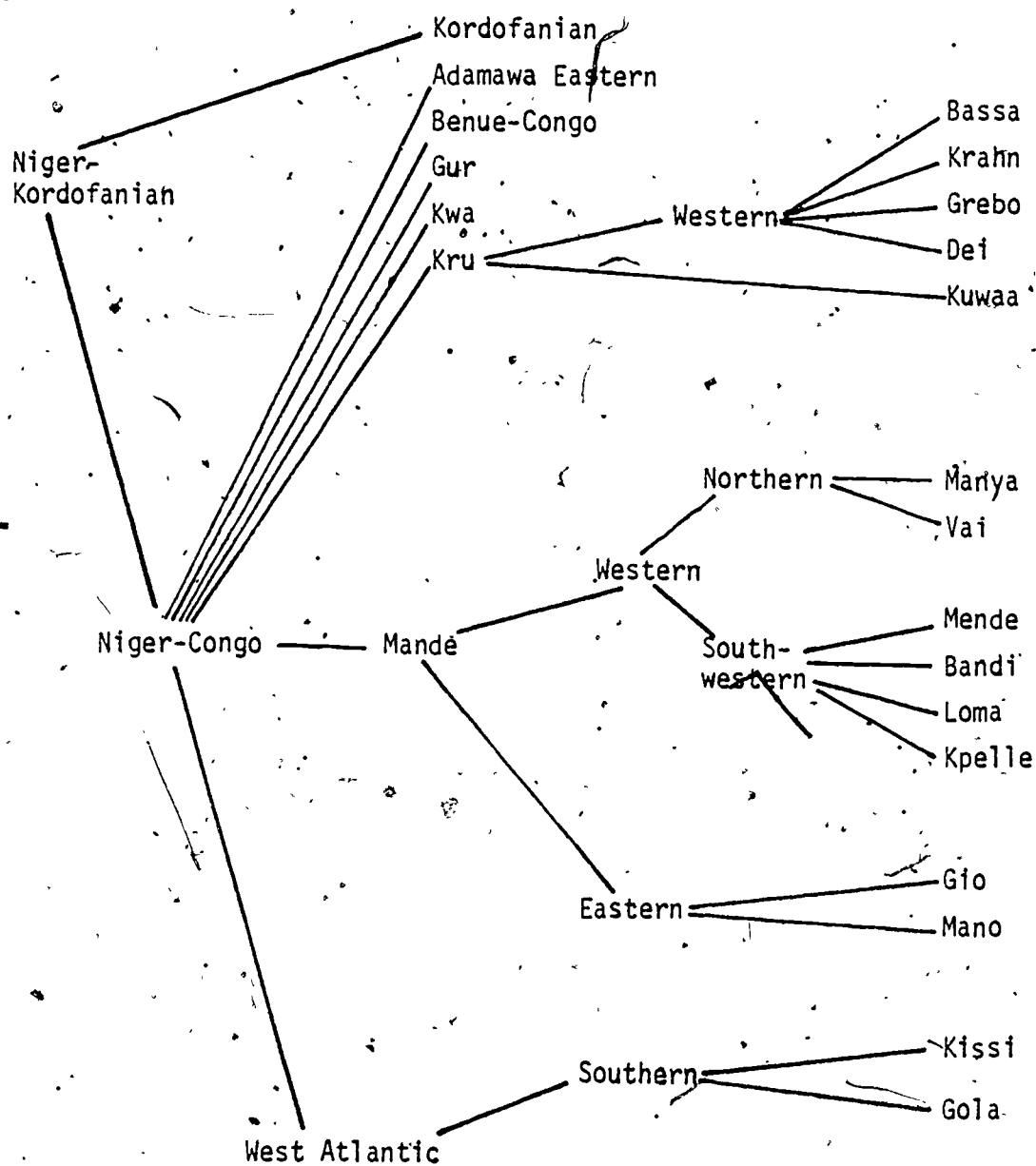


FIGURE (4A)

Indo-European correspondences from Greenberg (1957:42)

LANGUAGE	ONE	TWO	THREE	HEAD	EYE	EAR	NOSE	MOUTH	TOOTH
Breton	unan	dau	tri	penn	lagad	skuarn	fri	geny	dant
Irish	ón	dó	trí	kíjan	su:lǝ	kluas	sreán	bjal	fjakal
Welsh	in	daf	tri	pen	blagad	klíst	truín	keg	dant
Danish	en	to?	tre?	ho: dha	aǝ	o: ǝ	na: sa	mon?	tan?
Swedish	en	tvo	tre	húvud	öga	öra	näsa	mun	tand
Dutch	e:n	tve:	dri:	ho: ft	o: x	o: r	nö: s	monē	tant
English	won	tuw	triǝ	hed	aj	ihr	nowz	mawē	tuwē
German	ajns	tsvaj	draj	kopf	auga	o: r	na: ze	munt	tsat:n
French	œ, yn	dö	trwa	tē: t	œl/ jö	ore: j	ne	buuǝ	dä
Italian	uno,	due	tre	testa	okkjo	orekkjo	naso	bokka	dente
Spanish	una	dos	tres	kabesa	oxo	orexa	naso	boka	diente
Rumanian	un	doj	trej	kap	okju	ureke	naǝ	gura	dinte
Albanian	n'a	du	tre	koko	sü	vesh	hunda	goja	dbam
Greek	enas	dhjo	tris	kefali	matti	afth	miti	stoma	dbondi
Lithuanian	viegas	du	tris	galva	akis	ausis	nosis	burna	gantis
Latvian	viens	divi	trīs	galva	atss	auss	deguns	mute	zobs
Polish	Jeden	dwa	trzy	głowa	oko	ucho	nos	usta	zób
Czech	Jeden	dva	trí	hlava	oko	ucho	nos	usta	zub
Russian	odin	dva,	trj	glava	oko	ucho	nos	rot	zub
Bulgarian	edin	dva	tri	glava	oko	ucho	nos	usta	zab
Serbo-Croatian	jedan	dva	tri	glava	oko	Uho	nos	usta	zub
Finnish	üksi	kaksi	kolme	pa:	sihnä	korva	nena	su:	hammas
Estonian	üks	kaks	kolm	pea	silm	wilja-pea	nina	su:	hammas
Hungarian	ed	ke: t	há: rom	rül: fej	sem	rül	nina	sa: j	fog
Basque	bat	bi	hirü	büü	begi	belari	südü	aho	orts

FIGURE (4B)

Some West African Language Correspondences

LANGUAGE	ONE	TWO	THREE	EAR	EYE	MOUTH	TOOTH	HEAD	NOSE
Fulbe	do	didi	tati	nofru	viere	hunnuko	nyifre	hoore	ktal
Biafada	numa	bihe	biivo	nufa	-gire	musu	keede	gaga	-sini
Theme	in	ren	-sas	lens	-far	-sen	-sek	-bump	so
Limba	funte	taae	tatat	ifa	-ifa	-foti	iliti	kafa	peren
Kissi	pelec	miuu	ngaa	nilen	-ifo	sondoo	kinde	boleen	milindo
Bullom	bul	tin	ra	niu	-hol	nyphol	chag	-bol	-min
Gola	gun	tiel	taal	kenu	efe	onya	kesfa	edi	emia
Bambara	kilen	fila	saba	tulo	nyin	da	nyin	kun	nun
Oyula	kelé	fla	saba	toro	nyaden	da	nyi	nun	nun
Kuranko	gelen	fla	sawa	tule	ye	de	namen		
Manyakan	kelé	fila	sawa	toio	nya	da	nyi	kü	mü
Kono	nkele	sawa	sawa	toro	ya	daa	gire	kun	nun
Yai	dondo	fela	sagba	tolo	ja	da	nyin	kun	sun
Sosso	keden	firin	saxan	tuli	yee	de	nyinni	xü	noem
Loko	ngila	fele	sawa	nguo	ngau	nda	ngongou	ngu	hokpa
Hende	ita	fele	sawa	ngoli	ngahu	ndo	ngongolu	ngu	hokpa
Bandi	ngila	fele	sawa	ngoli	ngasu	nda	ngongolu	ngu	sokpa
Lorma	gila	felego	saago	goi	gaazuve	daa	niin	wun	sokpai
Kpelle	tono	feere	saaba	woli	nei	la	nyin	qun	sda
Mano	doo	peete	yaaka	too	nyie	le	s3	wakele	nyu
Dan	do	pira	yaka	tu	nyaga	di	s3	gaga	nyü
We	do	pire	yaka	turu	nyawe	le-bó	so	wun	ne
Nge	do	pilo	a	pe	lon	laga	so	me	nye
Mwa	do	ple	yaga	trona	yirebe	di	so	moru	nyi
Be	do	plao	ngad	turun	yowore	ye	so	mwunu	nye
Guro	du	fla	yaa	tone	yüe	le	süe	mbo	mi
Bisa	dinne	hira	karko	tur	yer	le	so	min	mi
Bobo, Fing	tele	pla	saxa	turu	nyoho	do	nyinf	mwon	bi
Del	boo	söö	tää	löö	gire	neen	gire	duru	merä
Bassa	do	söö	tää	löö	gire	uno	gire	tru	mölä
Guere	doo	söö	tä	ngü	gie	quo	nye	de	mera
Grebo	do	so	tä	nua	yile	uuno	nye	lu	mia
Kuwaa	dee	söö	tää	noi	si	wö	kala	wulu	nyu
Akan-Twi	baako	abien	abiesä	aso	ani	ano	eso	eti	ehwene
Ga	ekome	enjo	etä	toi	hiwaci	daa	no	yitso	gugo
Yoruba	eni	aji	eta	eti	oju	eno	envi	oli	imu

Invariably, the question of language versus dialect arises in the discussion of African languages, as in the phrase "he spoke an African dialect." The implication of this phrase is of course that there is but one African language. If we draw the recognized distinction between language and dialect, that of mutual intelligibility (if you can't understand the speech of someone, he is speaking a language different from your own, while if you can, it is a dialect of your own language) then the notion of dialect discussed earlier is quite wrong. By the above definition, Africa has somewhere between 1000 - 1500 distinct languages (estimates vary). Many of these languages also have several dialectal variants. At least four distinct dialects have been identified for Kpelle and for Lorma.

Although we may have resolved the problem of dialect, the reader may still be wondering just how closely these languages are related and in what ways they are related. The answer to this question is unfortunately quite complicated so that in the following paragraphs only a partial answer can be given.

To begin with, languages can be compared on the basis of their sound systems, their syntax, their vocabulary and their meaning (see Chapter II for definitions). The most common way to compare languages is to compare how two or more languages will represent a given word. As a general rule, the more basic words two languages have in common, the more closely the two languages are related. Figure 4 shows a comparison of some common words in European languages and in some of the languages in West Africa.

One of the assumptions behind the comparison of figure 4 and the chart in figure 3 is that of divergent development. At one time there was a single group of people who later separated into two or more groups. Once isolated, the language of the two groups developed in different ways until finally after a long period of time, they were no longer mutually intelligible. Presumably, this process has continued repeatedly and is the primary explanation for the degree of linguistic diversity in Africa today.

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Yet in addition to divergence, there is also convergent development, that of two different languages becoming more similar as a result of contact and commercial intercourse. It is possible to find two distinct language groups living together, sharing not only similar words, but turns of expression and cultural items. Thus with both the processes of convergence and divergence the precise relation of any one language to another may prove to be extremely complex, much more so at least than figure 3 would have you believe.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO STUDY A MANDE LANGUAGE ON YOUR OWN

1. Introduction

People have been learning foreign languages for centuries both with formal instruction and without. This fact is at least encouraging, though at this point, history has revealed no outstanding method or approach to language learning. Here in Zorzor, I know some high school students who are studying French in school...they are getting nowhere, at the same time, there are high school students who came from other parts of Liberia who learn Lorma within a year outside their daily academic studies.

This anecdote suggests two things, 1) a formal approach does not guarantee learning and 2) an informal approach does not necessarily inhibit it. Furthermore, most efforts to determine what is the most effective method to learn language have usually concluded that the most crucial differences in classroom effectiveness center around the quality of teacher, the organization of classroom procedures and learner interest and discipline. The method involved has rarely been deemed significant.

What this evidence means is that crucial to learning a language is a well-organized learning procedure (no matter what method is involved) and hard work; the more you work, the more you learn (within reason).

What this also means is that any method can be used to learn. Nevertheless it is important that the learner be aware of the variety of these approaches and their implications.

2. Aspects of Language Learning to Consider

If you have ever studied a foreign language before, you probably

encountered most of the following situations:

- (a) You know what you want to say, but you don't know how to say it either because you don't know the word or how to use it;
- (b) Two or three words sound alike, but have very different meanings;
- (c) You figured out how to ask the question, but couldn't begin to comprehend the answer;
- (d) You said something that you thought was appropriate and everybody laughed.

All of these problems are real, and represent different aspects of language learning that you need to know about.

The first problem points out that there are two modes of meaning in language: that found in words, and that found in the relationship between words. These two modes of meaning are more formally called vocabulary and syntax.

The second problem is another system, the means by which these modes of meaning are signaled. This system, more formally termed the sound or phonological system, concerns the contrastive sounds used by the language.

The third problem concerns an overemphasis on the production of sentences and an underemphasis on the comprehension of sentences.

The fourth problem concerns the social context in which the language is embedded, that is, what you said was technically correct in terms of (a) and (b) above, but appeared out of context. Your comment could have been humorous for any of the following reasons:

- (a) Thus it was correct, but not expected. That is, since so few foreigners say the right thing at the right time in the right way that the very correctness of the response is out of context.

- (b) Your comment may have been correct, but inappropriate, that is, in the specific context, another comment is required. You would no more think of greeting people at a funeral with "hi there" than you would of showing up in a bathing suit.
- (c) Your comment may have been humorous for other reasons as well. It may have been correct, but carried an additional meaning. In French if you say you are full rather than satisfied you mean that you are pregnant...a strange thing to say after a fine meal, particularly for a male. When you are in the process of learning the vocabulary and syntax of a language, you can expect some surprisingly humorous developments.
- (d) Your comment may have meant something other than intended. In The Lonely African by Colin Turnbull, one missionary is credited with saying "your bottom" rather than "good morning" because the user failed to make a tone distinction. This kind of error is normal when learning the sound system of the language.

For Lorma speakers learning English, the pronunciation of final consonants (the consonants at the end of words) are a problem. One of the general strategies which speakers use is that "when in doubt add an l." Thus I have heard will for way. But for good humor dead bottle for dead body (John Singler, personal communication) is supreme. Let's face it, these things are funny and the best way to deal with them is to laugh together. You may as well, for you are certain to be next if you are serious about learning a Liberian language.

These differences may be due to pronunciation, as in the above examples or to the wrong choice of words (malaprops).

These problems then, underscore the aspects of language that you need to know about in order to effectively study language. These can be summarized as 1) the organization of language: vocabulary, syntax, phonology; 2) speaking vrs. listening; and 3) social context (usage).

3. The Organization of Language

Language consists of three subsystems: 1) phonology (the sound system of the language); 2) the lexicon (the vocabulary of the language); and 3) the syntax (the system of putting words together to make sentences). In everyday language, language consists of 1) a set of distinctive sounds, 2) a vocabulary, and 3) a grammar: a set of rules stating how sentences are formed.

3.1 Phonology (the sounds of a language)

Every language has a finite set of distinctive sounds which are used to convey meaning. These sounds are called phonemes. While the inventory of these sounds is not the same from language to language, they are similar enough in most cases not to cause problems. Yet there are inevitably cases, however, where one language makes a distinction which the other doesn't. For some reason, if these distinctions are not part of your native language they will be hard to hear and hard to produce, yet with practice they can both be heard and pronounced giving you the same access to the phonemic distinction that native speakers have. Chapter VI contains sound drills designed to help you learn to hear the differences between those sound contrasts found in Liberian languages, but not in English.

3.2 Lexicon and Syntax (vocabulary and word order)

With the distinction between lexicon and syntax as that of words and their combination into sentences, it is worth while to consider what this means. Meaning in language is of two types, that which is general and systematic, and that which is individual and idiosyncratic. For example, we can say that elephants are big and mice are small or we can say that some elephants and some mice are big for their species, or small for that matter. This way of relating size to different items is general and systematic and can be constructed by relating one word to another, that is it can be expressed syntactically.

But it is also possible to express size in another way as the following sets illustrate:

drop, puddle, pond, lake, sea, ocean
 baby, child, youth, adult, aged
 pebble, rock, boulder

This usage is idiosyncratic, that is: drop, puddle, etc., are not systematically related to each other in form, but are simply different words. Thus the expression of systematic and general meanings is the domain of syntax while the expression of idiosyncratic meanings is the domain of the lexicon.

3.3 Syntax:

It is important to bear in mind that the division between lexical and syntactic meanings is not exactly the same from language to language though it is nearly so. Nevertheless, we may find one language expressing a notion syntactically whereas the other uses a single word. Below are some examples:

<u>English</u>	<u>Typical Mande</u>
calf:	cow child
to dance:	to do dance
sea:	big water
house:	place where one lives
potash:	bitter salt

Thus in your exposure to a new language, you will find that what you expect to be one word is actually several. One of the nice things about Mande languages is that if you learn that the way to say "worker" is literally "farm-work-do-person" and you know the words for "farm," "work," "do" and "person", you do not have to really learn any new words, only a new combination which turns out to be easier for most people. You can also expect to find words which require several words for translation into English.

4: What Does Language Ability Entail?

Everyone has heard of someone who speaks six or seven languages. The questions that this raises are what does this entail and how did they do it.

4.1 Competence and Performance:

In order to speak a language, you have to have considerable knowledge about the language. You have to know the sound system, though perfect knowledge of it isn't absolutely necessary. You have to know some words and some syntactic rules. The question arises, how many words and how many rules?

The number of words one needs to know varies from language to language because of differences in the way concepts are expressed, whether by syntactic devices, or by word compounding or by having one word covering a wide range of concepts. But by rephrasing the question as "how many concepts are necessary?", the question can at least receive an answer, though to my knowledge little systematic study of this question has been carried out. Rather cautiously, then, I throw out the figure of 1,000 to 2,000 concepts as being necessary to comprehend 90-95% of a conversation. This percentage marks the level at which one can keep up with the general meaning of the discussion.

A language is not just a collection of words but, as we have pointed out, it also contains a syntactic system. This syntactic system consists of a set of rules about how to combine words to make sentences. The answer is that you need to know most of them, something any good language text should present. While the general set of syntactic expressions are fixed, the way they are expressed may be straightforward or complex. Plurals in English are easy, but complex in German. Pronouns in English are straightforward but complex in the Mande languages.

4.2 The Question of User Utility:

It is one thing to talk about the kind of information you need to speak a language and another to talk about how it is actually used. For example we can tell someone about how to do multiplication, which principles are involved. That is, we can say that 6×7 is 7 added 6 times. Yet when we ask someone "what is 6×7 ?", the answer will be given in less time than it could possibly take to add seven six times. In doing arithmetic, we found it to our advantage to memorize the individual products rather than calculate them each time we need them. The calculator, on the other hand does just the opposite.

This example is intended to emphasize that simply stating the kind of knowledge that is involved in language does not necessarily mean that this is the form in which this information is used. In language teaching, two positions have been taken. One which might be called a "deductive" approach, and the other an "inductive" approach.

The deductive approach presents the learner with a set of rules to learn. Once these rules are learned, the learner is free to construct sentences. The inductive approach argues the reverse, that if you present the learner with a set of sentences that the learner will figure out the general patterns..

This second approach usually also presumes that there is relatively less to generalize about than the first. That is, what people do in learning a language is to learn a sentence type and develop variants of it by substituting words at various places.

These two views are quite different and presume two different notions of the human mind. The deductive approach presumes that the mind is like a calculator with little memory capacity and prefers therefore to generate new information rather than store it. The inductive approach considers the mind to have a much greater capacity for memory.

In this regard, it is true that the mind has a vast capacity for memory. Think of all the experiences, events, jokes and facts you can recall. Think of the words that are available to you, these number somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 items. What is truly remarkable about this is you can inventory them all within a split second. If I ask you which of the following are English words: "house", "tire", "fleurten", "vice"; you will have no difficulty whatsoever picking out fleurten as the non-English word. In this regard, the human mind is far superior to the computer.

It is this tremendous memory capacity that leads me to emphasize the importance of an approach which stresses the importance of the inductive approach: working with real sentences.

4.3 Integrating the Two Approaches:

This conclusion does not exclude a deductive approach however. The formal presentation of rules and generalizations can help a learner understand why a given sentence is expressed the way that it is and why each element is present. This kind of knowledge cannot be obtained directly from a native speaker of any language unless that person has been trained in linguistics. Such knowledge can be most easily obtained from the grammatical section of a language textbook which has been prepared by someone with formal linguistic training.

These rules are particularly useful in the beginning stages of language learning because they provide the learner with a set of statements with which to evaluate and interpret both incoming and outgoing sentences. However, when the learner becomes more competent in the language, to the point of actively producing and comprehending sentences in an ongoing conversation more or less spontaneously, the learner will no longer have need of these devices. That is, the kind of knowledge that they represent will have been converted into a more useable form.

5. Listening:

Much of traditional language teaching has placed great emphasis on production: the generation of sentences. This approach has implicitly assumed that if you can speak sentences, then you can also comprehend them. We are beginning to take note that these two skills (production and listening) are quite different activities and should be treated separately.

Earlier, we mentioned a problem of learning how to generate questions, but being unable to comprehend the answers. This is a typical problem of traditional approaches. At this time, language teachers are beginning to place more emphasis on being able to comprehend what is said during the earlier stages of language learning. This is not to say that no language production is emphasized, but rather that that comprehension should precede production at all times. This means that early emphasis is placed in understanding what is going on about you rather than being able to talk about it, and emphasis is placed on why a given sentence has the form that it does, rather than how to produce it.

After the learner has developed a listening fluency in certain areas, and knows what is being said and why, then is the time to encourage production of sentences for that topic.

6. Context

The process of communication involves two aspects; the message and the context in which the message is situated. A traffic light presents to us very little information (red, green and yellow) yet the context (a street intersection) permits us to provide a rich interpretation of the message: to stop, to go or to proceed with caution.

Learning a language can also be seen in this light, the message and the context. That is, in understanding a sentence, one can take advantage of the context in which the message is embedded for the interpretation of the communication as well as the message. The use of context is particularly useful for a beginning learner of a language, with only an incipient ability to interpret a message. For example, the context in which a greeting takes place is easily identifiable. The messages which can be asked are finite. The learner does not need to know the entire language, or even hear the entire sentence to know what is being said. A key word identified from a sentence may be sufficient for full comprehension of the message.

In teaching children to read, educators have found that context is very important. Beginning readers have a large amount of context (pictures) compared to the message (one sentence per page). When a child first approaches a new page, he/she will first examine the picture to delimit the range of possible messages that the sentence could represent. At one stage my son only used the first letter in each word, along with the context to construct the message. Not knowing how to recognize the words beyond the first letter, he would guess at its meaning, given the context, and pick a word that started with the same sound as the one he was reading and which made sense in the given context. Quite often he was correct and in so doing gradually built up his reading competence, but often he was not, though he might even complete a sentence having missed two or three words in the process. But the interesting thing was

that if the sentence made sense given the context he would continue reading, while if it did not, he would rescan the sentence for a better reading.

The point here is not how to teach children to read, but the value of context in learning a language. This means that if you can control the context, you have a better chance of comprehending the messages.

6.1 Ways of Controlling Context

Of course, the classroom is an ideal way of controlling context. Here you can define the range of what is being expressed within very narrow limits and thereby optimize context. Some of these techniques are given as follows:

(a) Sensit Build Up:

In this drill, the learner is given a list of messages which will be presented to him/her, whether a list of nouns, commands, activities, numbers or anything. Ideally this list should be in the form of pictures, real objects or demonstrations. The important thing however, is that the learner knows the order of presentation.

The tutor then says the first message. (The learner should know in advance the meaning of what is being said.) If it is a command then the learner should carry it out. If it is a picture, the learner should point to the cell. If it is a thing, then the learner should point it out.

The learner should know at this point, that the tutor will either repeat the message or utter something new. If it is a new message, it has to be the second item. Once the second item has been introduced, the tutor then drills the learner on the first two messages.

At this point, the learner can expect one of two messages which are known, or if not that, a new message will be the third item on the list. When the third item is introduced, the tutor will drill the learner randomly on the first three items until the learner can identify them easily.

Then the item is introduced and drilled in the same way until it is complete.

Usually only seven items should be introduced in this way during one drill, and no more messages are to be introduced, then the messages should be divided into two drills.

(b) Practical Sentences:

This approach can also be used to drill practical sentences that the learner would like to use. Here the learner draws up a list of seven practical sentences that he/she would like to know and the tutor introduces them to the learner in the target language in that order.

(c) Comprehending a Text.

Dialog and free dialog drills can be initially presented as totally unknown messages (no context). Learners then attempt to pick out what is already familiar to them from previous lessons or experience. This can profitably be repeated only two or three times.

Next the learner is allowed to look at the text to see how it is written. This helps the learner separate the flow of sounds into word sequences and will usually result in the identification of more words and more of the meaning of the sentence.

Next the learner is permitted to study the translation and go over the analysis of the text so that every aspect of the text is understood: the meaning of each word, and the reason for the presence of each element in the sentence. At this point, the learner should know what is going to be said, that is, the context has now been provided, but the usefulness of the text has not yet been exhausted.

The learner can listen to the text again, following along the written text, but this time he/she should be aware of what is being said and should know the meaning of each sentence. In order to do this, it may be necessary to hear the text several times, or to refer back to the analysis to be sure.

Finally, the learner can listen to the text without the use of written material, and should continue to do so until comprehension is 100%.

These texts should be returned periodically to be sure that comprehension is retained, and to reinforce the retention of this knowledge.

NOTE: To repeat a text verbatim is a virtual impossibility for most tutors, either due to boredom or to lack of experience in reading the language you are studying. For this reason it is preferable to record the text initially and rely on your recorder for repetitions rather than your tutor.

By the time the learner has gotten this far, he/she will know a lot of the language even though he/she still cannot produce it. Nevertheless, the production stage will be a lot easier because of this breakdown.

(d) Translation Drills:

One of the problems in production as well as recognition is figuring out or knowing how things would be said in a language. One method is trial and error, (learner says something and is, if lucky, corrected). An alternative to this is the translation drill. The learner either writes a composition in English for the learner to translate, or asks the learner to translate sentence by sentence. Here the learner knows what is going to be said and should have some idea of the words to be used and the kind of construction involved. Thus when the sentence appears, most of the context has already been provided.

Such drills should be taped, so that they can be reused.

(e) Known Event:

Here the learner asks the tutor to talk about a commonly shared event, such as going to the market, visiting a friend's house, or

even a foreigner to do in English. Again the learner will have narrowed the range of contexts and should be able to interpret the message more richly than otherwise.

(f) Picture Drills:

Another way of controlling the context is to use a picture of some scene or activity that the learner is (1) interested in learning about or (2) has some familiarity with already. The learner then asks the tutor to talk about the picture or asks the tutor questions about the picture.

(g) Eavesdropping:

If you find yourself in a situation where the language is being spoken, e.g. a bar, in a taxi, or cookshop, listen to the language with the aim of trying to pick words you know and getting a general idea of what the conversation is about.

(h) Outside the classroom there are also techniques which can be used to narrow the context. One is to place one's self in a place where a known activity will take place. Greetings, marketing, bartering and so forth. When I was in Mexico City a few years ago, I had at my grasp very little Spanish, but I did know the seemingly useless sentence "where is the post office?" Well, I found the post office, walked about a block away and asked my question. I knew what the answer had to be so I was able to figure out what the Spanish had to mean. Then I moved two blocks away and repeated the drill. Variations to this kind of exercise are limited only by lack of imagination.

We cannot underestimate the important role that memory has in language learning. We have already suggested that to have a minimum operating capacity a user must have a minimum of 1,000 to 2,000 concepts available for use both in recognition and production, as well as the understanding of how these words are organized into sentences (syntax).

In describing how to develop recognition skills, we suggested that the learner should spend considerable time listening in context: sentences should appear in a context in which their meaning would be clear, words should appear in the context of a sentence. This approach also suggests developing a familiarity with a fixed number of sentences.

Just think what this means: that while the specific goal of the exercise was the recognition of the given words, it is clear that in addition familiarity with these words has developed so that they might be recognized in other contexts. Furthermore, the specific sentences learned serve as the basis for recognizing a ~~set~~ of sister sentences in which only one word has been changed so that, even if the learner does not know the new word, the sentence may be understood due to context. Finally, the learner has learned to listen, a technique which will provide the primary source of new information about the language.

7. Learning Production

But production deserves its due. One cannot go around listening all the time, though I suspect one would be better off with an ability to comprehend what was going on about than with an ability to talk about it. Anyway, learning to produce sentences is also an important language ability.

To this end, particularly during the beginning we recommend that sentences as a whole be memorized. Now everyone claims that they have a weak memory and that memorizing scores of sentences is a real impossibility. Yet such is not the case, though one's language learning memory may not be operating at full capacity. That is, whether it is true or not, ~~we~~ should take the view that one's brain is like a muscle (an increasingly popular view) and that the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. In partial support of this view is a report by August Schliemann, the archaeologist who discovered Troy, who incidentally claimed that he had a weak memory. Source: Ilios by Henry Schliemann. 1880; London, John Murry).

First of all I took pains to learn to write legibly, and this I succeeded in doing after twenty lessons from the famous calligraphist Magnée, of Brussels. Afterwards, in order to improve my position, I applied myself to the study of modern languages. My annual salary amounted only to 800 francs (£32), half of which I spent upon my studies; on the other half I lived--miserably enough, to be sure. My lodging, which cost 8 francs a month, was a wretched garret without a fire, where I shivered with cold in winter and was scorched with the heat in summer. My breakfast consisted of rye-meal porridge, and my dinner never cost more than twopence. But nothing spurs one on to study more than misery and the certain prospect of being able to release oneself from it by unremitting work. Besides, the desire of showing myself worthy of Minna created and developed in me a boundless courage. I applied myself with extraordinary diligence to the study of English. Necessity taught me a method which greatly facilitates the study of a language. This method consists in reading a great deal aloud, without making a translation, taking a lesson every day, constantly writing essays upon subjects of interest, correcting these under the supervision of a teacher, learning them by heart, and repeating in the next lesson what was corrected on the previous day. My memory was bad, since from my childhood it had not been exercised upon any object; but I made use of every moment, and even stole time for study. In order to acquire a good pronunciation quickly, I went twice every Sunday to the English church, and repeated to myself in a low voice every word of the clergyman's sermon. I never went on my errands, even in the rain, without having my book in my hand and learning something by heart; and I never waited at the post office without reading. By such methods I gradually strengthened my memory, and in three months' time found no difficulty in reciting from memory to my teacher, Mr. Taylor, in each day's lesson, word by word, twenty printed pages, after having read them over three times attentively. In this way I committed to memory the whole of Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield and Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. From over-excitement I slept but little, and employed my sleepless hours at night in going over in my mind what I had read on the preceding evening. The memory being always much more concentrated at night than in the day-time, I found these repetitions at night of paramount use. Thus I succeeded in acquiring in half a year a thorough knowledge of the English language.

I then applied the same method to the study of French, the difficulties of which I overcame likewise in another six months. Of French authors I learned by heart the whole of Fenelon's Adventures de Telemaque and Bernardin de Saint Pierre's Paul et Virginie. This unremitting study had in the course of a single year strengthened my memory to such a degree, that the study of Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese appeared very easy, and it did not take me more than six weeks to write and speak each of these languages fluently.

With the effect of the moist air of Holland, my complaint in the chest gradually disappeared during my first year's residence in Amsterdam, and it has never returned. But my passion for study caused me to neglect my mechanical occupation in the office of Mr. F. C. Quén, especially as I began to consider it beneath me. My principals would give me no promotion; they probably thought that a person who shows his incapacity for the business of a servant in an office proves thereby his unfitness for any higher duties. At last, however, through the intercession of my worthy friends, Louis Stoll of Mannheim and J. H. Ballauf of Bremen, I had on the 1st of March, 1844, the good fortune to obtain a situation as correspondent and bookkeeper in the office of Messrs. B. H. Schröder & Co. of Amsterdam, who engaged me at a salary of 1200 francs (£48); but when they saw my zeal, they added 800 francs a year more by way of encouragement. This generosity, for which I shall ever be grateful to them, was in fact the foundation of my prosperity; for, as I thought that I could make myself still more usefull by a knowledge of Russian, I set to work to learn that language also. But the only Russian books I could procure were an old grammar, a lexicon, and a bad translation of Les Aventures de Télémaque. In spite of all my enquiries, I could not find a teacher of Russian, since, with the exception of the Russian Vice-Consul, Mr. Tannenberg, who would not consent to give me lessons, there was not one in Amsterdam who understood a word of the language. So I betook myself to the study of it without a master, and, with the help of the grammar, I learned the Russian letters and their pronunciation in a few days. Then, following my old method, I began to write short stories of my own composition, and to learn them by heart. As I had no one to correct my work, it was, no doubt, extremely bad; but I tried at the same time to correct my mistakes by the practical exercise of learning the Russian Aventures de Télémaque by heart. It occurred to me that I should make more progress if I had some one to whom I could relate the adventures of Telemachus; so I hired a poor Jew for four francs a week, who had to come every evening for two hours to listen to my Russian recitations, of which he did not understand a syllable.

As the ceilings of the rooms of the common houses in Holland consist of single boards, people on the ground-floor can hear what is said in the third storey. My recitations therefore, delivered in a loud voice, annoyed the other tenants, who complained to the landlord, and twice while studying the Russian language I was forced to change my lodgings. But these inconveniences did not diminish my zeal, and in the course of six weeks I wrote my first Russian letter to Mr. Vasili Plotnikoff, the London agent for the great indigo dealers, Messrs. M.P.N. Malutin Brothers, at Moscow, and I found myself able to converse fluently with him and the Russian merchants Matwieff and Froloff, when they came to Amsterdam for the indigo auctions. After I had completed my study of the Russian language, I began to occupy myself seriously with the literatures of the languages I had learned.

8. F.S.I. Levels

There can be no doubt about it, Schliemann's system worked. Most people however would say, is this the most direct way to language mastery? Can't this approach be made more efficient? The answer is of course yes. And to explain this, we need to examine the system by which the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) determines the language competence of an individual.

The FSI examination is based on six levels ranging from S-0 (no competence) to S-5 (equivalent to that of a native speaker). The crucial level however is S-3 which is really the first stage at which the speaker has good control of the language and can continue developing language competence without special study. I call this level minimal language working capacity.

To attain an S-3 in a foreign language is a real accomplishment and one which a learner who has attained this level can really feel proud of, though this should not by any means undervalue the attainment of the intermediate S-1 and S-2 levels. Furthermore, the development of these intermediate levels should be seen as targets in themselves and as steps along the way. These levels are summarized by the following self-test check list.

A CHECK LIST FOR SELF-APPRAISAL OF SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

(All answers must be YES to achieve at least the level of proficiency listed on the left, except for four items at the S-3 level.)

		YES	NO
S-0+	Can you use a minimum of thirty words in appropriate contexts? (i.e., not just count or recite the days of the week).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S-1	Can you tell someone how to get from here to the nearest hotel, restaurant, or post office?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you ask and tell the time of day, day of the week, date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you order a simple meal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you negotiate for a hotel room or a taxi ride at a just price?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you buy a needed item of clothing or a bus or train ticket?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you understand and respond correctly to form questions about your nationality, marital status, occupation, date and place of birth, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you make a social introduction and use appropriate leave-taking expressions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you use the language well enough to assist someone who does not know the language in coping with the situations or problems covered by the S-1 range?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S-1+	Can you meet all S-1 requirements and at least three of the S-2 requirements listed below?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S-2	Can you describe your present or most recent job or activity in some detail?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you give detailed information about your family, your house, the weather today?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Can you give or take simple messages over the telephone? (Forget the telephone, can you give or take simple messages?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Can you hire an employee or arrange for special services, taking care of details such as salary, qualification, hours, special duties?(can you order a table from a carpenter?) ☒ ☐

Can you give a brief autobiography including a statement of your immediate plans and hopes? ☐ ☐

Can you describe the geography of the United States (or some other country) or familiar location? ☐ ☐

Can you describe the basic structure of the United States government? ☐ ☐

Can you describe the function and purpose of the organization you represent? ☐ ☐

Do you feel confident that you understand what native speakers want to tell you about the above topics at least 80% of the time? ☐ ☐

S-3

Are you afraid that you will misunderstand information given to you over the telephone? ☐ ☐

(Answers should be YES)

Can you speak to a group of educated native speakers on a professional subject and be sure you are communicating what you want to, without obviously amusing or irritating them linguistically? ☐ ☐

Can you listen, take notes, and summarize accurately a speech or an informal discussion on your area of special interests, heard on the radio or over a public address system? ☐ ☐

Can you (on a social occasion) defend U.S. attitudes toward culture, race relations, or foreign aid from attack by an anti-American student or politician? ☐ ☐

Can you cope with such trying linguistic situations as broken-down plumbing, an undeserved traffic ticket, a serious social or diplomatic blunder made by you or a colleague? ☐ ☐

Can you follow connected discourse on a non-technical subject, e.g., a panel discussion on the status of women? ☐ ☐

Can you serve as an informal interpreter on subjects in the S-3 range? ☐ ☐

Do you feel that you have a professional command (rather than just a practical one) of the language? ☐ ☐

S-3+ Can you meet all S-3 requirements and at least three of these S-4 requirements?

☐ ☐

S-4 In professional discussions, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?

☐ ☐

Are you able to alter your speech deliberately, depending upon whether you are talking to university professors, close friends, employees, etc.?

☐ ☐

Can you serve as an informal interpreter for a U.S. senator or cabinet official on all diplomatic and social functions?

☐ ☐

Do you practically never make a grammatical mistake?

☐ ☐

Do you think you can carry out any job assignment as effectively in the language as in English?

☐ ☐

S-4+ In discussions on all subjects, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?

☐ ☐

S-5 Do native speakers react to you as they do to each other?

☐ ☐

Do you sometimes feel more at home in the language than in English?

☐ ☐

Can you do mental arithmetic in the language without slowing down?

☐ ☐

Is your vocabulary at least as extensive and precise as in English?

☐ ☐

Do you consider yourself a native speaker of the language?

☐ ☐

The difference between S-2 and S-3 is really that between knowing a language so that you can use it in any context, and knowing enough of the language so that you can use it in a fixed context. This means that the skills listed under S-1 and S-2 can be specifically targeted for. That is, it is possible to define a specific set of contexts: biography, greetings, simple messages, etc. in which it is possible to build a working language competence. This can be accomplished by developing a listening ability for the range number of sentences which are likely to appear in that context and a speaking capacity for the specific skills.

By specifically targeting for these goals, it should be possible to achieve an S-1 after 50-60 hours of study (assuming that this time is being used effectively) and it should also be possible to achieve an S-2 after another 100 hours. One of the important things to remember about this phase of language study is that performance rather than competence is being measured, thus it is not how much you know, but how well you use it that counts. This is why context is so very important, for comprehension is as much anticipating what is to be said (context) as it is understanding the content of what is being said. Thus, "hanging in there" and making the effort to communicate (even if by gesture) is at least half the battle.

But while these targets are goals in themselves which the learner can aim for and accomplish, they can also be seen as steps on the way toward real language competence (S-3). The internalizing of a few hundred sentences can serve as the basic corpus of messages which can be expanded and applied to other situations.

In the communications handbook that accompanies this text, this has been the design: the first lessons are aimed at S-1 skills, while the later lessons aim at S-2 skills, so that by the time the book is completed, the learner should achieve an S-2 level and be well on the way to achieving an S-3 ability. Though in all honesty that level will require continued study.

Earlier we suggested ways of developing listening comprehension, what follows is a way of completing the use of the text, the learning of how to produce it.

9. Memorizing a Text (Layering)

Memorization of a text can be viewed as a sequential process beginning with the first word and going on to the next and so forth. Yet there is another way to view the process, and that is to see the text as a series of layers. For example, in learning to comprehend a text (discussed earlier) several steps were outlined, each one gleaning more information from the text, building up in the learner's mind layer upon layer of information about the text. When a learner has learned to comprehend a text, the job of memorizing the text is already half completed. The following steps are listed below:

- A. Go over the text sentence by sentence (phrase by phrase and even word by word if necessary) with your tutor to develop as accurate a pronunciation as possible.

One procedure for doing this is for the learner to attempt to say the sentence. If the sentence is correct the tutor will say that it is correct (or signal so by not saying anything); if the sentence is incorrect, the tutor will repeat the sentence. This should continue until the learner at that point has done his/her best.

The major problem at this stage is the generosity of the tutor. The tutor really has to be encouraged to be critical. Thus the learner must repeatedly ask the tutor if that is the real way it is said, or whether it can be said better and should show enthusiasm in the tutor's pointing out these fine points. Otherwise the tutor will be inclined to let pronunciation slide.

- B. Once the text has been gone over carefully, the text should be repeated sentence by sentence until a normal rate of speed is achieved. This can be practiced using a variety of techniques. Repeating the sentences after the tutor (or a tape recorder), along with the tutor or by tracking.

Tracking is a technique of repeating a sentence after about a second's delay. This has the effect of separating the listening part of the task from the production part of the task.

- C. To be sure you are aware of all the distinctions, the learner should practice writing the sentence down after hearing it. This dictation drill should be done sentence by sentence, and in beginning stages, the sentence should be repeated as many as three times.
- D. Writing down the text from memory is also a good exercise. This is a form of self-test which will give the learner a good idea of what is known and what isn't.
- E. This stage should be followed by the learner attempting to say the text from memory with the tutor prompting at first.
- F. The task is complete when the learner can rattle off the entire text at a normal rate of speed.
- G. This exercise can be followed up by a question-answer drill in which the tutor asks questions in such a way that the memorized sentences will be the answers to the questions.

NOTE: Initial texts do not have to be long, as few as five sentences. But the learner should try to increase the length of these texts as soon as possible.

10. Self-Instructed and Learner-Centered Approaches

There are a number of reasons for emphasizing this kind of approach to language acquisition.

- 1. African languages are usually under such low demand for foreign language instruction that teachers are unavailable, untrained or at best minimally trained. This means that when a tutor is hired, that person will never make the teaching of the targeted language his profession (unlike French, Chinese or Russian) and will probably be given a crash course in how to teach the language. Inevitably, this person will feel awkward because of the expectations

placed on him/her and the inadequate training given. This situation will create an avoidable tension in the classroom.

2. It is the learner who is the person who will either profit or suffer from the experience. It is the learner who has the most at stake. A successful language learning program will lead to a deeper and a more effective experience for the volunteer or other language learner. This being the case, it would be better to concentrate efforts on helping the learner to learn rather than on helping the teacher to teach.
3. Many language training programs allow insufficient time, regardless of how that time is used to allow for the achievement of a minimal speaking competence. This means that serious learners will have to continue their learning outside the classroom anyway.
4. Learners trained in a teacher-centered program in which they have little control in how the class will be run, are ill equipt to make the transition to learning on their own.

For these reasons, many educators are moving to learner-centered approaches. These approaches place more attention on the learner, giving the learner the sophistication in the types of learning techniques that are available, the ways drills should be run and so forth. While these approaches have their own drawbacks and may be slower during the initial stages, they do have a number of advantages.

1. Tutors are released from their anxiety. Their responsibilities are consonant with their training and experience. They are responsible for (1) providing a model of the target language (2) correcting learner responses and (3) running drills which the learner will help to establish. The tutor is not responsible for preparing lessons, for the success of the student, or for grading the student's progress. Thus the tutor is only responsible for what any native speaker of a language is capable of doing. This situation eliminates the tension of the classroom that arises when these responsibilities are placed on the tutor. As a result the relationship between tutor and learner is more of cooperation rather than apprehension.

2. The learner being placed fully in charge of learning no longer must bear the burden of suffering under a tutor whose methods the learner objects to. If the methods being used are unsuitable, they can be changed.
3. Given insufficient time in a training program, learners will be forced to switch to a learner-centered program anyway if they are going to continue their language learning, so why not begin a learner-centered emphasis from the start?
4. A learner who has experienced learner-center training from the start, will be well prepared to make the transition program to learning on their own.

However, learner-centered language training requires a considerable amount of training of the learner in the techniques and approaches of language learning. This cannot only be done in the abstract, but requires supervision by an experienced language teacher and ideally a textbook which is oriented toward this approach to language learning such as the following textbook. In the communications handbook accompanying this volume, each lesson is both aimed at the learner (though it can be used by a classroom teacher or a partially trained tutor) and contains detailed instructions as to how drills should be run and dialogs used. It presents the grammatical notes in terms which an untrained learner can understand and contrasts the target language with English so that the learner can see exactly where the major points of contrasts. Finally the handbook contains a set of suggestions for self-study, procedures which the learner can carry out on his/her own to continue language study.

11.1 Tutor Selection

When making the transition from a formal language training program to a totally learner-centered program, the first major task will be to locate a tutor who will be willing to help you.

In this regard, it is important for the learner to remember that a number of factors are involved in the tutor learner relationship. Some of these are listed as follows:

1. Personality. There is always the possibility of a personality clash. That for some reason the tutor and the learner do not hit it off, or for that matter they may. Factors here may be age, sex, education and cultural background as well as pure personality differences.
2. Relationship. In most cases, a learner-tutor arrangement will necessarily develop into a deeper relationship involving mutual reciprocations based on available resources. The learner will be given things, have things done for him/her as well as being informed about the workings of the community. In return, the learner can be expected to return the favor in terms of textbooks or school fees if the tutor is a student, money or other gifts. This relationship can be controlled by both parties, and it is in general sound advice to deepen the relationship slowly.
3. Knowledge of language. It is commonly accepted that the real language is known by old people, and not by young schoolboys and girls, therefore, it is often said that if you want to learn the real language it is best to contact the old people. This approach too, has its problems, however, for it may well be that old people do not know English or any other medium of common communication, therefore the learner may actually at first engage a tutor who knows English.
4. Knowledge of how to write the language. For most Liberian languages, a writing system has been established, and which is in use by at least some members of the community. If this is so, it is preferable to find a tutor who can read and write in the target language, for it will help you in recording texts and writing down sentences. You can even ask your tutor to prepare texts, dialogs and sentences for you to study.
5. Reputation of the tutor. Not everyone in the town has the same esteem in the eyes of the community. To some extent the esteem of the tutor will rub off on the learner and vice versa.

These points suggest that in engaging a tutor that one should proceed cautiously. The learner should wait until he/she is established in town or until sufficient contacts are made before showing interest in a tutor. Then one should ask respected members of the community who might be recommended. (Hiring someone without a recommendation is a real gamble.) One might ask other volunteers, teachers, your landlord, village head, pastor or other such persons.

It is always good to not commit one's self too soon. That is by saying that the period is temporary, for a few weeks only or that one wants to try a number of people, one can avoid the problem of being stuck with someone who isn't working or of the embarrassment of having to fire someone.

Finally, when the learner has found a tutor with whom he/she feels confident, the arrangement can be made more permanent. It is only at this time that the learner should gradually allow the relationship to deepen.

11.2 Organizing a Learning Schedule

The most important point to be made here is consistency. That is whatever program the learner decided to set up, it should be followed religiously. It is far better to maintain a modest commitment of only a few hours or even less than to set a schedule of learning that is too ambitious to keep. The learner should endeavor to establish learning times that are unlikely to be disturbed by special events, and in the event that they are, the language session should be rescheduled.

The second most important thing is to structure the sessions so that the learner and the tutor are aware of what is supposed to take place during the session and what is supposed to be done by the learner as preparation or follow-up. The following schedule is designed for a learning session involving three contact periods per week. This structure is probably too ambitious for the learner who is also holding down an 8 hour job, but if followed will allow the learner to progress rapidly. In the event that the learner has less time to commit to the learning of the language, the schedule can be pared down.

A well-written language textbook ought to have a large number of drills that can be used in the self-instructional mode. Most such textbooks are organized so that a chapter be completed each week by a class meeting five hours per week. The following outline suggests one way in which a textbook chapter can be organized into a weekly lesson plan.

11.3 Use of a Spoken Dialog

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Class
Period
#1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Listen to the dialog with book closed, for comprehension. Record the dialog with a cassette tape recorder for later use. (2) Listen to the dialog, this time following the book (listening for word-divisions and other phonological cues). (3) Analyze the dialog for content. Work with your tutor if necessary so that you understand the full meaning and structure of each sentence. |
| Home-
work
#1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Listen to the dialog on the cassette recorder for comprehension so that each sentence is correctly identified and each word is heard as a separate entity. (2) Repeat the above as often as is necessary. If the structure of the dialog is unclear, return to the written text, following the spoken dialog word by word until it becomes clear. (3) Write the dialog several times, copying directly from the text (not from memory). (4) Enter new vocabulary items into your notebook. |
| Class
Period
#2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Listen again to the dialog spoken by the tutor. (2) Practice saying each sentence with the tutor (using a backward buildup if necessary) until each sentence of the dialog is said flawlessly at a normal rate. (3) Practice dialog with tutor or with other learners in the class. |

Home-
work
#2

- (1) Memorize dialog for following class. For beginners this dialog will be quite short (3-4 lines) but by the end of the first year, these dialogs will enlarge to about 20 lines per week.

Class
Period
#3

- (1) Use the dialog in class. Remember to simulate the context of the dialog completely; stand, sit, look the other person in the eye at the appropriate times, use props.
- (2) Develop variations on the dialog using word substitution or sentence "transformation" as appropriate to your level of knowledge.

11.4 Use of Written Texts

Written texts should consist of short (ten-sentence) descriptions, stories relevant to a specific context. As the course progresses, the texts will become longer.

Class
Period #1

- (1) Presentation, recording and analysis of the text.

Home-
work
#1

- (1) Listening comprehension of the text (sentences as units, words as discrete entities) and the writing out of the text (not from memory).

Class
Period
#2

- (1) Practice in hearing the text with phonemic accuracy, practice in saying the text at normal speed with phonemic accuracy.

Home-
work
#2

- (1) Memorization of the text (now that it is understood both syntactically and phonetically). This will involve writing it out, saying it orally, and tracking the taped version to achieve normal speed and timing.

Class
Period #3

- (1) Recitation of text orally and/or writing it down from memory.

Homework #3

- (1) Correction of noted errors.

11.5 Use of structural drills

All drills should be taped for home listening and practice.

1) Phonological drills:

Basic phonological transcription can be learned through dictation exercises. Errors in these dictation exercises will reveal problem areas in phonemic discrimination.

In consultation with the language coordinator and the textbook, discrimination drills, including minimal pair exercises can be prescribed, recorded and used, both in class and at home.

It is important to remember that learners must be able to hear phonemic differences before they can be expected to articulate them.

Once phonemic differences are mastered, accuracy can be further improved through transcription exercises. Articulation can be further improved through dialog and text repetition, tracing and memorization.

2) Syntactic Drills:

Each drill begins with listening comprehension. It is important that learners comprehend what is going on: the purpose of the drill, the meaning of the words and constructions involved, and what they are supposed to do with it.

Once the drill is understood, learners should go through the drill, repeating each sentence after the tutor if necessary until normal speed and accurate pronunciations are achieved.

The drill is run according to the specifications given in the textbook. Answers and responses must be given at normal speed. If that is impossible, either go back to the preceding step or abandon the drill and consult with the language coordinator. The drill should be practiced until it is carried out perfectly, though this mastery need not be achieved during the first running of the drill in class.

3) Vocabulary:

A minimum of 40 lexical concepts should be acquired each week. These may come from the text or from the generalized vocabulary lists.

Several types of drills have been developed for the learning of vocabulary in the Communications Handbook companion volume. Space does not permit a detailed statement of these drills, but the following list is indicative of the types involved.

- (a) vocabulary
- (b) flash cards with pictures on one side
- (c) related vocabulary lists
- (d) the sens-it-cell

12. Conclusion

This chapter has summarized the thinking, strategy and methodology involved in the study of a foreign language and has gone into the planning and construction of these learning materials. It is presented here for the express purpose of providing the learner with a general understanding of the task and the way to proceed.

CHAPTER III

INSTRUCTIONS TO TUTORS

1. General Remarks

The chances are that if you have been asked to tutor someone in a Liberian language, you probably have never taught your language to a foreigner before. If this is the case, you may be very worried because you are not sure about what to do. If you are worried, continue to read this chapter, for it contains a set of suggestions about what is important in a language learning situation.

2. Preliminary Considerations

Even before you get started, there are some important considerations, the first is the organization of the learning situation. The learning sessions have to be considered important by both the tutor and the learner. To emphasize the importance of these sessions, it is important to "mark" these learning sessions as follows.

A. Time:

The sessions should have a specific beginning time and a closing time. These times should be kept the same from week to week. There should also be a penalty for lateness and no matter what the reason, missed sessions should be made up.

B. Place:

The sessions should be held in a specified place which is considered good for learning. Tables and straight chairs are considered better than sofas and beds. Classrooms are better than homes, but homes are better for most people than bars.

C. Agenda:

There should be an agenda or class plan of what is to be done during each period. This can be prepared either by the learner or by the tutor, depending on what has been arranged. An agenda should contain a list of topics to be covered, including: (1) pages in the textbook, (2) correction of homework, (3) practice of dialog, (4) taping of dialogs, (5) vocabulary study, (6) free conversation and so forth. These agendas (technically called "lesson plans") should be stored somewhere (a file, notebook, etc.) as a record of accomplishment during the course of study.

D. Preparation/Followup

A learner should expect to do out-of-class preparation and followup for each session. This may involve studying the dialog, grammar, cultural notes, taped aspects of the class session, vocabulary work, preparation for class discussions or taking excursions into the language community to practice what has been learned. Whatever the event, the tutor and learner should agree to the preparation and followup activities, preferably in writing (see agenda) before the end of the preceding class.

3. The Role of the Tutor

In most cases, the tutor is not required to be an experienced language teacher or someone who knows a great deal about the grammar of the language being studied. Rather, what is expected of the tutor is simply what follows:

- A. An ability to speak your language clearly
- B. An ability to be patient
- C. An ability to point out and correct mistakes.

4. Classroom Rules of Order

There are a number of rules of running a class, which if followed will help to make the class situation useful and productive.

- A. Always have a session agenda and stick to the topic.
(see 2C above)
- B. Always begin on time and stay within agreed upon time blocks.
- C. Emphasize the use of the target language. The tutor should try at first to explain things, directions, concepts and so forth in the target language using English only if absolutely necessary (the use of English is usually a hinderance rather than an aid to learning another language).
- D. Drills should be run smoothly with no delays or interruptions. If the learners are taking too long to respond, it will be necessary to simplify or change the drill. The instructions for running each drill are given along with each drill in the communications handbook. A drill can be simplified either by skipping the drill altogether or by eliminating some of its complexity. One way to do this is to treat the drill like a dialog to be learned (see instructions for learning dialogs in the communications handbook). Once familiar with the content of the drill, it can then be reintroduced as a drill; this time with better results.

Another way is to have the students read the drill from the textbook, though the normal way to run a drill is without student use of textbooks. These drills should also be recorded onto tape so that they can be replayed as one of the homework activities.

If you and the class are still having trouble with a drill, ask the language supervisor or whoever is in charge of the program to help you.

While many tutors think that they have to provide more than this, this is all that is truly necessary. But, at the same time, the ability to do these things is very important. Because of this, the above points are discussed in more detail below.

A. Speaking Clearly

When you speak your language to your students, you should try to speak at a normal rate of speed. This means that you should not speak too rapidly as if you were in a hurry, or too slowly, as if you were talking to a small child.

B. Being Patient

It is important to remember that learning a language is a slow process because it requires a lot of learning: not only new words, but new ways of saying things which are very different from the way that the learner is used to saying things. You will find that a learner will forget much of what you tell him and that is why you must repeat things frequently: dialogs, stories, drills, and so forth. From the viewpoint of the tutor, it appears as though the learners are not very smart. This is why it is so necessary for the tutor to be very patient with the learner.

C. Correcting Responses

While it is important to be patient, it is also necessary to correct errors in the responses that learners give. If they say something incorrectly, they should be told that it is incorrect and be asked to say it again correctly. One way to do this is to simply repeat the response correctly following an incorrect response. The learner hearing this will then correct his response following the model of the tutor. If it is a matter of pronunciation, and the student is unable to pronounce it correctly after two or three tries, then the tutor should tell the learner that the pronunciation is still incorrect, but that it will be possible for him/her to correct it later on. Remember, if the student is shown that his pronunciation of certain sounds is incorrect, the chances are that the student will learn to pronounce the sounds correctly in time.

CHAPTER IV

KPELLE SHORT SUMMARY REFERENCE GRAMMAR

Preliminary Remarks

This reference grammar is a summary of the basic grammatical structures in Kpelle. It is written for the general reader. Those who wish more detail or a more sophisticated linguistic analysis are referred to the linguistic materials available in professional publications, particularly those of William Welmers on phonology and morphology. As much as possible, I have tried to use Welmers' terminology to reduce confusion. The reader is expected to refer to other sections of this handbook for detail on Mande phonetics and the Mande languages.

THE SOUNDS OF KPELLE

You will understand and pronounce Kpelle better if you begin your study with the Introduction to Liberian Languages. This section provides an introduction to hearing and producing the sounds of Kpelle. You will find it helpful to review this lesson periodically throughout your study.

To speak Kpelle well, you must first learn to hear it. Many times you will think you are hearing - and even speaking - correctly, only to find that you are mistaken. Try to practice the drills in this lesson until you are fairly proficient, then the rest of the lessons will be easier and you will learn faster.

The Alphabet

The sounds of Kpelle are represented by the following alphabet. Examples of words containing each sound are given. Have your tutor pronounce them for you. (You may want to tape these at the end of the session so that you can listen to them as you have time.) Be careful - do not expect the letters to represent the same sounds as they do in English. The two-letter combinations like /gb/ and /kp/ represent single sounds.

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Notes</u>
/a/	ɓala 'sheep' namu 'fight' sɔle 'medicine'	similar to /a/ in 'mama'
/ã/	fãa 'wind' sãa 'honest'	strongly nasal
/b/	bèrɛ 'trousers' bôki 'bucket' bàla 'bush dog'	some speakers do not distinguish this sound from /ɓ/
/ɓ/	ɓá 'rice (cooked)' ɓéla 'split' ɓó 'open' sɔɓɔ 'groundhog'	

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Notes</u>
/d/	da Deniŋ Dukòò	'and' 'April' 'Monrovia'
/e/	de nêne pene	'river' 'which' 'turn' this is not like English sound /ay/ in 'say' - listen carefully
/ē/	kpēla	'water deer'
/ɛ/	lele meni	'good' 'business'
/ē/	fiē	'head pad'
/f/	fāa folo	'wind' 'shine'
/g/	gāla gwe	'box' 'banana'
/gb/	gbai gbómò gbêe	'corn' 'wasp' 'who' this is not /g/, /b/, or /ɓ/
/ɣ/	ɣau ɣele yele	'yam' 'when' 'day'
/i/	ílāa gbìŋ mina pili	'your name' 'bed' 'spoon' 'throw' this represents 2 sounds: the vowel similar to /e/ in 'he' and the vowel similar to /i/ in 'hit'
/ĩ/	sĩi tĩya	'spider' 'taboo'
/k/	kāa kē/ kòlo	'see' 'do' 'poor'

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Notes</u>
/kp/	kpao 'no' kpɛɛ 'finish' kpɔ kpɔ 'knock-knock'	contrast with /gb/
/l/	fláa 'name' léle 'good' lí 'go'	this is similar to English /l/ in some dialect areas and less similar in others. Follow your tutor's pronunciation.
/m/	mēni 'business' muluŋ 'dust' mina 'spoon'	
/n/	naaŋ 'four' naa 'there' nia 'older sibling'	
/ny/	nyii 'sleep' nyɔɔ 'bad' nyɛɛ 'fish'	like /ny/ in 'canyon'
/ŋ/	ŋɔni 'bird' naaŋ 'four' íŋuŋ 'your head'	similar to /ng/ in 'sing'
/o/	owèi 'yes' kôya 'far away' kòlo 'poor'	
/ɔ/	lɔɔ 'market' kɔlɔ 'book'	
/ɔ̃/	gɔɔ 'crow' pɔ̃yɛ 'write'	
/p/	pala 'weave' pɔlɔ 'get old'	
/s/	saa 'today' sama 'gift'	

<u>Sound</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Notes</u>
/t/	taan koti	'one' 'coat'
/u/	puu tuna nua	'ten' 'rain' 'people'
/ū/	fūa īsūa	'powder' 'nose'
/v/	vōlo va.	'black snake' 'comb'
/w/	wala woo	'thousand' 'language'
/y/	yaḡa yee yoo	'onion' 'hill' 'wet'
z	zoo	'doctor'

Tones

There are three levels of tones in Kpelle: high, mid, and low. Further, there are two contour tone patterns: high to low, and mid to high to low. They are marked on the vowel as follows:

high - / [˥] /	zoo	'native doctor'
mid - /no mark/	tuna	'rain'
low - / [˩] /	nyōō	'be afraid'
high-low - / ^{˥˩} /	saa	'today'
mid-high-low - / ^{˥˩˩} /	tisō	'sneeze'

PHONOLOGY

1. Consonants (as represented in the orthographic system)

p	t	k	kp
b	d	g	gb
f	s		
v	z		
b	l		
w	r	y	
m	n	ŋ	

Dialect Notes

- In the areas nearest the coast, /s/ is similar to the English /s/. In the middle section of Kpelle territory, it is often closer to English /sh/; while in the northern areas, it is often pronounced as an English /h/.
- In the northern areas, an /l/ will often sound midway between /l/ and /n/ when it is the first sound in a word, or sometimes be replaced altogether by /n/.
- In the northern areas, /y/ between two vowels will often be elided or changed to a /y/ type sound.
- In the northern areas, an /r/ between two vowels (as written in the texts) will be pronounced as an /l/.

2. Vowels

	Front	Mid	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
	ɛ		ɔ
Low		a	

- Vowels may occur long or short. When long, they are written as two vowels.

- b. Round back vowels, when followed by a front vowel, are less rounded and somewhat more fronted.
- c. /i/ after /y/ is not pronounced.
- d. Nasalization is significant. There is a difference in meaning between sīi, 'spider' and sīi, 'tribe', for example.

3. Tones, Stress, Intonation

a. There are three pitch levels: high, mid, and low.

b. There are five possible patterns in a word:

high throughout:	pēle	'also'
mid throughout:	pele	'to start'
low throughout:	pēle	'small'
high to low:	-pēre	'side (of the body)'
mid to high-low:	pomūŋ	'germinate'

c. Words with high, high-low, and low tone patterns have stress on the initial syllable. Mid-high-low have stress on the second vowel, since this stress is automatic and does not differentiate one word from another (as English stress does in 'progress' as a noun and 'progress' as a verb). In the area around Gbarnga, /k/, /g/, and, most frequently /y/ are not pronounced when they are in an unstressed syllable between two front vowels.

d. In some words, the pattern high or high-to-low becomes high-to-mid. These are marked in the Totota orthography.

e. The patterns presented apply to words without prefixes or suffixes. Affixes carry their own tone patterns.

f. In a pause, usually marked in writing by a comma, as in English, the last syllable tone will rise sharply, and a slight pause will ensue.

g. To mark a question: the last non-low tone will be noticeably higher. If the sentence has only low tones, all low tones are slightly higher and tense.

4. Other

a. After a mid tone, low tone becomes high-low.

Example: pére tònò 'one house'

taa tònò 'one town'

b. Kpelle, like several other Mande languages, changes the initial consonants of some words when a nasal sound (/m/, /n/, /ŋ/) comes before it, or when a low tone is placed on the syllable. This happens frequently in Kpelle. These are the changes:

p	→	b	ɓ	→	m
t	→	d	l	→	n
k	→	g	ɣ	→	ŋ
kp	→	gb	w	→	ŋw (or ŋ before u, o, ɔ)
f	→	v	y	→	ny or n
s	→	v			

WORDS AND CONSTRUCTIONS

Nouns and Noun Phrases1. Independent and Dependent Nouns (Alienable and Inalienable)

Independent nouns are items which are either abstractions which are not usually possessed by anyone or items which can be obtained and disposed of by a person. Independent nouns may occur with or without a possessor indicated.

Dependent nouns are those items regarded as integral parts of the possessor - they cannot be transferred or discarded. Most of these nouns are body parts, relatives, or membership names. They always must have an identified possessor. Dependent nouns fall into two groups - persons and non-persons. Persons alternate consonants, while non-persons do not.

Example: í lee 'your mother' gálon ñee 'the chief's mother'
 í pôlu 'your back' gálon pôlu 'the chief's back'

Persons also have a plural form: the suffix /-ni/ (after /ŋ/, /-ñii/).

Example: í lón 'your child' í lónii 'your children'

There are also some dependent nouns derived from verbs by the addition of a suffix /-i/.

Example: see 'sit down' í seei 'your seat'

2. Plurals

Most Kpelle nouns have a single form to represent both singular and plural. Whether there is one or more of something than one is indicated by the context. However, there is one category of nouns which does have a plural form - nouns which name or refer to people, such as mother, father, child, etc. The plural is indicated in this way when the noun is dependent: (pronoun) + noun + ni. (If a noun ends in /ŋ/, it will have a /ñii/ for the plural.)

When the noun is independent, the plurals are varied. They will be given in the vocabulary in the beginning. If you learn a word which you think should have a plural, ask your tutor.

Examples: nūu 'person' nūa 'people'
lōlon 'child' nīa-pelee 'children'

3. Possessive

In marking possession, the possessor always comes immediately before the possessed noun. Generally, the first noun will be in the specific form.

Example: Nōlon goi 'the child's stomach'

A pronoun is also used with dependent nouns if it is a noun denoting a person.

Example: Nōlon nēe 'the child's mother'

4. Specific and Non-Specific Nouns

In English there is a difference between "the table" and "a table". Kpelle makes a similar, but not identical, reference. For example, in English we always say, "the sun is shining", but Kpelle uses the nonspecific form: "a sun is shining." On the other hand, a amle to whom you owe respect is always addressed by his title in the definite form: "the Sir." Others may or may not receive such a mark of respect. Dependent nouns almost never occur in the specific form.

The specific is indicated by:

low tone + noun + i

Examples:

péle	house	béleì	the house
boli	goat	molìì	the goat
wúlu	tree	nwúliì	the tree

The low tone affects the initial consonant (see the Grammar Note in Lesson 1.) There are two additional notes:

- When a word ends with a /ŋ/, then the /-i/ suffixed is lost.
Example: ~~gálon~~... 'the chief'.
- The two falling tones fall only to mid in the specific.
Example: kâlon... 'chief' gâlon... 'the chief'
- When the word ends in /u/, it will change to an /i/ when the /-i/ suffix is added.
Example: wúru... 'tree' nwúrii... 'the tree'
- An /N/ may accompany the low tone.
Example: wúru...nwúrii

One additional note: if there are two or more adjectives and the noun in the specific, only the last adjective has the specific marker as well.

5. Compounds

Two or more words may be combined to form a new word. In all compounds, the final stem has a low tone (or high-low if the preceding word has a mid-tone).

Examples:

kolo	'book'	lâa	'leaf'	kolo-lâa	'page'
tou	'palm nut'	wulo	'oil'	tou-wulo	'palm oil'
kelen	'motor vehicle'	pere	'path'	kelen-pere	'road'
tée	'chicken'	yalon	'egg'	tée-yalon	'chicken egg'
mii	'to eat'	sale	'medicine'	mii-sale	'pill'

A special class of compounds are reduplicative forms.

Example: kpèya-kpèya 'important'

6. Noun phrase

The word order for a noun phrase is as follows:

- 1) possessor; 2) noun; 3) adjective; 4) numeral; 5) specific suffix;
- 6) demonstrative pronoun.

Pronouns

1. Subject Pronouns

Kpelle has three sets of subject pronouns. Note that it distinguishes between a singular and plural 'you'.

Affirmative - for Present, Future, Customary tenses

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	ŋa 'I'	kwa 'we'
2nd	ba (ya) 'you'	ka 'you'
3rd	a 'he, she, it'	da (di) 'they'

Negative - for Present, Future, Past, Hortative-Consecutive tenses

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	é	kúfé
2nd	ífé	káfé
3rd	vé	dífé

Affirmative - for Past, Hortative-Consecutive tenses

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	ŋá	kú
2nd	í	ká
3rd	è (é)	dí

Affirmative - for Conditional tense

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	ŋà	kwà
2nd	bà	kà
3rd	à	dà

Negative - for Customary tense

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	fa	kúfa
2nd	ífa	káfa
3rd	va	dífa

Negative - for Contrary to Fact; Conditional tenses

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	ngài	kúi
2nd	ii	kái
3rd	èi	dii

The forms below are alternative pronoun formations. The first set really represents the verb káa + a subject pronoun. It is often used as a substitute for the pronoun alone.

I'm coming.	ngáa pái.	ng pái.
You're coming.	íkáa pái.	ba pái. (ya pái.)
He's coming.	gáa pái.	a pái.
We're coming.	kúkáa pái.	kwa pái.
You're coming (pl.).	kákáa pái.	ka pái.
They're coming.	díkáa pái.	da pái.

2. Object Pronouns

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st	N 'me'	kú 'us'
2nd	i 'you'	ká 'you'
3rd	'him, her, it'	dí 'them'

These pronouns come directly before the verb.

Examples: ngáa 'see me'
kúlé 'teach us'

3. Indirect Object

In English it is possible to say either 'give me the book' or 'give the book to me.' Kpelle also distinguishes between an object (book in the above example) and the person to whom things are given, said, shown, etc. For this second function Kpelle uses a special set of pronouns:

mà	me	kúa	us
yâ	you	kâa	your
mà	him/her/it	dîa	them

These always come after the verb as in:

è mò mã.

"He told it to me."

You will find that many of the Kpelle verbs which use this "ma" series are the same as those in English which are "to me" verbs. But this is not always the case. In Kpelle, for example, "help" ...kpon, uses the "ma" series, while "give"...fé uses a different pronoun set, altogether, the "mi" series. Hint: Use "ma" whenever the sentence seems to require a "to ____" form. You will be right more often than not. Whenever you notice a verb with a "ma" after it, take note of it, so you will remember.

The "mi" series generally indicates 'on behalf of' or 'for'.

mí	kúe
yé	káa
mì	díe

Example: Ge mí. 'Do it for me.'

4. Possessive Pronouns

Independent Nouns

ná	'my'	kú	'our'
f	'your'	ká	'your'
nà	'his, her, its'	dí	'their'

When a possessive pronoun is used, the specific suffix must be placed on the noun.

Example: nápersí 'my house'

Dialect Variation: The singular possessive pronouns vary somewhat. In the northern areas you may hear /nɔ/ or /a/ for 'my', /é/ for 'your', and /ná/ for 'his, her, its'. Thus, listen carefully for what your informant and neighbors say. Also, make sure you use the right tone or there may be some confusion.

Dependent Nouns

Dependent nouns require a possessor.

N	'my'	kú	'our'
f	'your'	ká	'your'
	'his, her, its'	dí	'their'

Examples:	nân	'my father'	kúnân	'our father'
	ínân	'your father'	kánân	'your father' (pl.)
	nân	'her father'	dínân	'their father'

5. Independent Pronouns

Independent pronouns are used in marked complement construction and also in some emphatic situations. These are:

nyá	'I'	kuá	'we'
fá (yá)	'you'	káa	'you'
nyà (lâ)	'he, she, it'	diá	'they'

Examples:	nyá be.	'It's me.'
	lí à-diá.	'Take them.'

6. Conjunctive Pronouns

kà	you
dà	he
dwa	we

Conjunctive pronouns are used only with another noun or a singular pronoun in this format:

pronoun _____ pronoun + remainder of sentence

Examples:

Dà Moses dà pâi.	"He and Moses are coming."
Kwà Moses kwa pâi.	"Moses and I are coming."

This can also be used to express the idea of accompanying someone or some people. Thus, the sentences above could also be translated "He is coming with Moses" and "I am coming with Moses."

7. Compound Expressions

The first element of a compound expression is the pronoun ka, da, or kwa.

The second element is: a pronoun showing either the person you are speaking to, or those you are speaking about.

The third element, -mi, occurs only after kâa or dîa to indicate that the whole reference group encompasses more than two people.

Examples: da ñyaa	'they (including him)'
da diâ-ni	'they (including more than 2)'
kwa yâ	'you and I'
ka ñyaa	'you and he' (you including him)

The subject pronoun in the sentence follows three pronouns and agrees in person and number with the first pronoun in the combination. So:

Kwa ñya kû lì daai su.	'We (he and I) went into town.'
Ka Flomo kâ lì?	'Did you go with Flomo?'

8. -po

-po is a dependent noun which occurs frequently in Kpelle. Basically, it expresses two kinds of ideas: indirect object and possession. To an English speaker it will seem like a pronoun. Examples of its use: "give it to us"...dêe kúpó; "where is your home?"...ipó taai kóó. Sometimes it will best be translated as a possessive pronoun - ours, mine, his, etc. But in Kpelle, it is a dependent noun.

Adjectives

Adjectives function differently in Kpelle from the way they do in English. First, there are 2 major classes of adjectives: predicating and attributing. Predicating adjectives, by far the largest class, are derived from verbs. In other words, if you know the verb, you can predict the adjective form. The meaning, however, may differ slightly from the meaning of the verb from which it was derived. The word kéte, 'big' is the only adjective that does not differ from the verb form. The chart below shows you how adjectives are formed. Although this chart will help you produce the right adjective forms, fluency will only come when you are so familiar with the adjective forms that you do not have to use these forms.

Verb Stem

Monosyllabic Stem Consonant + Vowel	Bisyllabic Stem. Consonant + Vowel + Consonant + Vowel	Consonant + Vowel + Vowel	
Suffix é	C + i, e, or e	CVC + i, e, or e	C V + i, e, or e
Suffix á	C + a	CVC + a	C V + a
Suffix ó	all others	all others	all others

Examples:

táma	"to be plentiful"	támaa	"a lot of"
léle	"grow, flourish"	lélee	"fine, nice, pretty"
kpólu	"get ripe, redden"	kpólúo	"ripe"
wíe	"get heavy"	wíee	"heavy"

Note: the suffix has a high tone except when the stem has a low tone; then the suffix tone is also low.

Alternatively, the adjective can be formed by simply altering the tone of the verb: low tone replacing the stem tone and high-low where there is a mid tone on the noun it modified.

Example:

yoo
seye yoo

"get dry"
"dry clothes"

1. Uses of Adjectives

More important are the uses of adjectives. They can be predicative - that is, act as a verb. Remember, not all adjectives can be used this way.

object + adjective stem + suffix vowel + í

Examples:

fãai

"It's hot."

nyai fãai.

"The water is hot."

kú ketei

"We are big."

Note: the English translation uses a subject where Kpelle uses an object.

Negative:

fé + adjective stem + ní

Examples:

Fé fãa ní.

"It is not hot."

Nyai fé fãa ní.

"The water is not hot."

Kufé kete ní.

"We are not big."

Adjectives can also be used with a noun to form compound words. And as in the case of compounds, the second member (the adjective) has a low tone.

Example:

fólo

"empty"

seŋ-folo

"dish"

The English speaker will find it difficult at first to know when to use the verb stem and when to use the adjective stem as if it were a verb. Generally the verb stem is used in descriptions ... "That girl is pretty." ... not "That is a pretty girl." Also, the predicative implies only that a certain quality is present. The verb is used in expressing the activity, how the subject got the quality, who made it so, etc.. So, in saying something is red, we use the adjective form "kpɔluɔ." If we want to say it got dry, will be dry, the sun dried it, etc., we use the verb form "kpɔlu."

Verbs can also function as nouns without adding any suffixes. For example: ɲuma... "to steal":

A ɲumàì.	"He is stealing it." (low tone marks the object it)
A ɲuma kɛì.*	"He is making steal."
ɲumaàì.	"He is a thief."

*ɲuma is a noun here, the object of the verb kɛ... "to make, do."

2. Adjectives as Nouns

Adjectives can also be used as nouns. For example:

kɛtɛ	"big"
gɛtɛ	"a big one"
gɛtɛi	"the big one"

The speaker assumes that you know which things are being discussed.

3. Adjectives as Adverbs

They also function as adverbs - in marked complement phrases.

a + low tone + adjective

Note: a is the preposition or particle meaning with.

Examples:

Ké à nélee. "Do it well."

Gaa à nélee. "It is good."

E ké à nélee. "It was good."

Note: the kaa forms are equivalent in meaning to the regular predicative. The "é ké" forms indicate past.

4. Comparisons

English has comparison using different forms of the adjective - large, larger, largest. In Kpelle, there is no change in the adjective for any of these meanings. Often, the meaning comes from the context: if you ask what animal is big, by implication you are asking which is biggest. When the meaning is unclear, Kpelle speakers will express the comparison explicitly using the verb tie to pass or surpass. So: for something er than something else:

é tee ... ma -er

Example:

zeyei ní néleei é tee nyita ma.

"This shirt is better than that one."

Literally: this shirt is good, it surpasses that one.

If something is the ---est:

noun + specific + adjective + specific

Example:

zeyei néleei "the best shirt"

If two things or actions are similar:

.... yee

(for things)

Example:

zeye ɣí nèleɛi yêe nyiti.

"This shirt is pretty like that one."

... yêe berei...

for activities,
abilities, etc.

Example:

Fa sen kaa yêe berei ya gaa lai.

"I don't see the way you do."

Numerals

1. Numbers

The Kpelle numbers 1-10 are as follows:

tano	1	lɔɔlu mei da	6
feere	2	lɔɔlu mei feer	7
saaba	3	lɔɔlu mei saaba	8
naan	4	lɔɔlu mei naan	9
lɔɔlu	5	puu	10

To express a number 11-99, this is the form:

puu <u> X </u> kau <u> X </u>

If you are expressing 20, 30, 40, etc., then it is just:

puu <u> X </u>

Examples:

puu feere = 20

10 + 2 = 20

puu káu lɔɔ lu mei feere = 17

10 kau + 7 = 17

puu saaba káu feere = 32

10 + 3 kau + 2 = 32

To say a number in the hundreds:

nan (pɔlu) <u> 10's </u>

Examples:

ḡuḡ tònɔ pòlu puu náaḡ káu ḡaḡ = 144
 100 4 polu 4 kau 4 = 144

ḡuḡ lóɔ lu mei feere = 700
 100 x 7 = 700

To say a number in the thousands:

wála _____ ḡuḡ _____

Examples:

wála feere ḡuḡ saaba pòlu puu = 2310
 1000 + 2 100 + 3 polu + 10 = 2310

Note: In counting, the lóɔlu of lóɔlu mei da, etc.. is usually omitted.

2. Numerals

Numerals are similar to nouns in Kpelle. They can be given a prefixed low tone to indicate that a certain number of the total is being discussed and are known to speaker and hearer:

tònɔ	'one'	dònɔ	'one of them'
tá	'some'	da	'some of them'

If the numeral is modifying a noun, however, then the low tone only affects the noun and the number keeps its stem form.

Example:

bere ta "some houses (of those already mentioned)"

The specific suffix can also be indicated with numbers:

tɔŋɔ... 'one'	dɔŋɔ... 'one of them'	dɔŋɔi... 'the only one'
feɛɛɛ... 'two'	veɛɛɛ... 'two of them'	veɛɛɛi... 'the two of them'
		'both of them'

Note that neither ta nor keelee takes the specific.

3. Noun + Number

In Kpelle, the noun comes first, then the numeral.

Example:

tɛɛ naan	"four chickens"
----------	-----------------

There are several words which act as numerals.

Example:

ta	"some, any"
kɛlee	"all"
tɛɛ támaa káa bɛ.	"There are a lot of chickens here."
támaa	"a lot of, many"

Do not use the specific form for the independent (the first) noun.

You can use numbers without the noun.

Example:

veɛɛɛ	"2 of them"
veɛɛɛi	"the 2 of them"

Other1. Identification

To ask what the name of an object is, you say:

- Lé ðe ní? - 'What is it?'
 Lé ðe ńí? - 'What is this?'
 Lé ðe tí? - 'What is that?'

The answer is:

- X ká ńí. - 'This is X.'
 X ká tí. - 'That is X.'

Examples:

- Lé ðe ńí? - 'What is this?'
 Kpee ká ńí. - 'This is a chair.'

2. Location

"Where" questions are very similar to "what" questions. The form is as follows:

_____ lá koo?	Where is _____?
_____ lá ðe.	_____ is here.
_____ lá naa.	_____ is there.

- Examples: Kpee lá koo? 'Where is the bench?'
 Kpee lá ðe. 'The bench is here.'

Location and identification sentences both form their negative in the same way:

_____ fé ní.	'This is not _____.'
_____ fé tí.	'That is not _____.'
_____ fé bée.	'_____ is not here.' or: 'There is no _____ here.'
_____ fé naa.	'_____ is not there.' or: 'There is no _____ there.'

Examples:

Kpee fé tí.	'That is not a bench.'
Kpee fé naa.	'There is no bench there.'

A variant is this:

_____ féi.	'This/that/it is not _____.'
	'_____ is not here/there.'
	'There is no _____ here/there.'

The meaning of the statement depends on what was asked.

Example: Kpee féi.	'This isn't a bench.'
	'There is no bench here.' etc.

3. How Much/How Many

The Kpelle word yeelu is a question word requesting information about quantity. It translates into English as either 'how much' or 'how many'.

Examples:

How much (does it cost)? = yeelu be?

How many are there? = yeelu kaa naa?

How many _____ did you bring? = Yá pà à _____ yeelu?

4. Locatives

In English we usually describe the location of something by using a prepositional phrase - "in the box," "on the table," etc. Kpelle uses a system of nouns to express these ideas. You have already learned here/there. (naa/bɛ). As you can see in the dialogue and text, the other locative expressions are noun phrases: generally an independent noun followed by a dependent noun. Formally it is:

possessor noun + locational/spatial noun, dependent
+ specific form

Examples:

Possessor Noun

Dependent Noun

pere 'house' + mù 'space inside'
= bɛɛi mù... 'inside the house'

pere 'house' + lá 'space at, space near'
= bɛɛi lá... 'near the house'

Nenîi gáa bɛɛi mù... 'The woman is in the house.'

Further, if you want to indicate the location of the activity expressed by the rest of the sentence, this phrase is placed after the verb. If placed elsewhere in the sentence, these noun phrases can be used to express slightly different ideas:

as indirect object: kú kàa bɛɛi mù... "We looked inside the house."

as the subject: bɛɛi mù tɛi... "The inside of the house is big."

5. Marked vs. Unmarked Complements

In Kpelle only a few phrases come after the verb in a sentence. These phrases are generally referred to as complements. There are two types of complements. Those labeled unmarked are so called because they carry no explicit grammatical marking.

Examples: bérei káa daai pôlu. 'The house is on the other side of town.'
 bérei káa naa. 'The house is there.'

Others are called marked complements; for example, Gé a maa felaa., 'Do it quickly.' /a/ is the marker. The important point: these are the only types of phrases which come after the verb in Kpelle. Complements are a very small set of constructions in Kpelle.

6. Marked Complements

Kpelle uses a marker /a/ where in English we might use an unmarked object. Quite often the idea is "with something" or "in such and such a way." So, for example:

dí pà à nyée.	"They brought fish."
is more literally:	"They came with fish."
è gè à nées.	"He did it well."
is more literally:	"He did it in a good way."

You will generally use this correctly if you can turn the sentence into a "how" question: "How did he do it?", "How did they come?"

/à/ is sometimes expressed in a pronoun form /là/, which is just 'it', 'him', or 'her'. Thus, pá là, 'bring it.'

Note: a is the preposition or particle meaning with.

Examples:

Ké à nées.	"Do it well."
Kaa à nées.	"It is good."
È ké à nées.	"It was good."

Note: The kàa forms are equivalent in meaning to the regular predicative. The è kè forms indicate past.

7. Objects

In Kpelle, all direct objects come before the verb.

Example: Kú zuai sɔŋ. 'We catch animals.'

8. be

Do not think of /be/ as 'is'. It isn't. be is used in two ways. The first is the use as part of the question 'What is this/that?' Notice that /be/ is mid-toned, not high, in this phrase. (/bé/ with high tone occurs in questions about location.

9. Emphasis

bé is used in emphasizing a word or phrase in Kpelle. (In English we can resort to a change in voice tone. Do not try it in Kpelle.)

- a. to emphasize the subject of a sentence...

subject + <u>bé</u> +

for present (conditions), past, and future, the subject pronoun is not present. In other tenses bé + pronoun forms ba.

Example:

Nee baâ saa.

"His mother died."

Lit: "His mother, she died."

- b. to emphasize an object: move the object to the front of the clause + bé + remainder of the sentence.

Example:

ná mɔlɔŋ ní nyà.

"I bought this rice."

Mɔlɔŋ ní bé ná nyà.

"This is the rice I bought."

- c. to emphasize a complement:

for marked complement: place complement without marker at the beginning of the sentence + bé followed by the remainder of the sentence + là.

Example:

ḡá ḡúrii tée à gbêya. "I cut the tree with a cutters."
Gbêya bé ḡá ḡúrii tée là. "It was a cutters I cut the tree with."

for an unmarked complement: there are two forms which express a slightly different meaning. The first expresses the idea of emphasis on the particular location, while the second emphasizes where altogether. So, for example:

ḡá bù ḡeyii sù. "I poured it in the pot."

can be:

ḡeyii bé ḡá bù zù. "It was THE POT I poured it into."
ḡeyii sù bé ḡá bù "It was the POT (not something else)
naa. I poured it into."

For the first type, the complement, but not the dependent locative word, is moved to front followed by bé and then the remainder of the sentence + the dependent noun with a 3rd singular possessive pronoun. In the second case, the whole phrase, including the noun, is moved, followed by bé; the remainder of the sentence and finally naa in the place of the complement. (Expressions of time may be treated as either object or marked complements.)

10. wo... 'own'

wo is sometimes used to indicate or emphasize possession. Often it means that part of something is yours - you have a share.

Examples:

i wo loii

"your country"

ku wo moloŋ

"our rice (our share of the total)"
(our own rice)

11. Next Week

nòkui.ŋi means next week unless used with a past construction; then it means last week.

12. Yes and No. "Owei" really means "what you said is correct", and "kpao" means "what you said is not correct." Thus the correct answer to "Don't you have bananas?" is "Owei" or "Yes, I have no bananas."13. "Kpera ye" is often translated as "please". However, it is more indicative of supplication than the English please. It is quite polite Kpelle to omit a "please" where we feel it necessary in English. The Kpelle will use "kpera ye" where the request is seen as unusual or serious, or to indicate persistence. You can best learn its use by observing when it is used. (Also, the use of "I beg you" in Liberian English is parallel to "kpera ye" in Kpelle.)14. Yá li mií-ta?

/ta/ is a word which makes the question more polite. This is Jorquellie Kpelle. In Sanoyea Kpelle, the word used is /na/. These are placed after the verb in short questions when addressing someone to whom you want to show respect or friendship. Failure to use them is not rude, however.

15. Connectives

Just as in other languages, sentences and words can be linked in many ways...

- a. da which is usually translated as "and" joins only 2 nouns or a noun and a third person pronoun.

Example:

ná mólón yá da yába.

"I bought rice and onions."

Sumo da Fulomo pa.

"Sumo and Fulomo came."

- b. kpéni fèi means "because" or "for". kpéni fèi means "It is not without a reason", so it always introduces the cause or reason for the previous statement.

Example:

Kpéni, fèi, yá támaa káa naa.

"Because there is a lot of water there."

- c. máa-meni na means "for this reason". (You also hear meni ma). It emphasizes that what you said is the reason.

Example:

Kú pa yába meni má.

"He came for onions."

- d. à kè tí means "in that case". It generally introduces a sentence and refers to what has just been said.

Example:

À kè tí, fêe í manan mii.

"In that case, you'll have to eat cassava."

- e. nyaa bé can be translated as "consequently" or "as a result".

It can connect two clauses or introduce a sentence by referring to what has gone before.

Example:

Nyaa bé, ná lli.

"And so I went."

- f. kéle means "but" and for the most part is used just as in English.

Example:

Kéle, kú fe pá ní.

"But we didn't come here."

Relative Clauses

In Kpelle, a relative clause is a sentence marked with the specific suffix -i attached to the final word to indicate that it is functioning as a relative clause. The object or complement refers to what is in the relative clause portion:

Examples:

Fé nũui kolon è pài.

"I don't know who came."

Lit.: I-not the person know he it came.

Gáa goloi lonoi, Sumo è dèe bói.

"He is reading the book that Sumo gave him."

Lit.: See him reading the book, Sumo he it gave to him.

(Sometimes, nyii ("who" "which") or yii may occur at the beginning of the main clause.) Of course, an entire sentence may serve as a sentence subject or modifier.

Examples:

Nũui è wée pài, è lì
saa.

"The person who came yesterday went today."

Béi kélee à lí nãai, bià
màn ba pôri lli.

"Wherever he went, you may go also."

Béi, which comes from bé + i, is used to make a relative clause indicating "where."

Béi + clause + naa + _____ + i

Note: even if the final word in the phrase has a specific marker -i, still add an -i. If the word ends in -ii, however, do not add a third.

Example:

Béi na lít naái...

"Wherever I'm going..."

Béi na lí naa a moloŋ...

"Where I took the rice..."

Verbs1. Verb Forms

Present or Progressive	na pài. Fé pài.	I am coming. I am not coming.	stem + i stem' + i
Future	na pài pài. Fé pài pài.	I will come. I will not come.	stem + i stem + i
Past	ná pà. Fé pá ní.	I came. I did not come.	low stem
Customary	na pá. Fa pá.	I come. I do not come.	low low
Conditional	na pá, ... na wàla pá, ..	If I come, ... If I do not come, ...	low stem
Imperative	Pá! Ka pá! Ífé pà!	Come! (s.) Come! (pl.) Do not come!	stem low
Hortative-Consecutive	... ná pá ... fé pá	... and (I) came ... and (I) didn't come	stem low
Completed Action	na pá.	I have come	stem
Irrevocable or Recently Completed Action	naá pá.	I have just come.	stem
Contrary-to-Fact Conditional	nái pá, ... Féi wàla pá, diféi lí.	If I had come, ... If I had not come, they would not have gone.	low stem low

from Spoken Kpelle
William E. Welmers
Liberia, 1955

2. Imperative

In Kpelle the imperative is expressed:

(ye)	+	verb stem	-	"you (sing.)"
kwa	+	verb stem	-	"we"
ka	+	verb stem	-	"you (pl.)"

Examples:

(ye) pã.

Come (sing.).

ka pã.

Come (pl.).

This is used in the same situations as the English imperative.

The negative imperative is formed as follows:

negative pronoun + verb stem + low tone

Examples:

ifé pã.

Don't come (sing.).

kafé pã.

Don't come (pl.).

3. Present Progressive

This is the same as the English /-ing/ form of the verb: "I am coming.", "He is cooking.", etc. In Kpelle, this form is expressed:

subject pronoun + verb stem - i

Examples:

a pãi.....'he is coming'.....a - he + pã - come + i - ing

di lónoi.....'they are counting'.....di - they + lóno + i

The negative is very similar:

negative subject pronoun + verb stem + i
--

Examples:

vé pài.

'He is not coming.'

dife lónoi.

'They are not counting.'

This verb form is quite useful - think how often you use the English equivalent. There is also another similarity to English: it can be used to indicate something which will happen soon - he is coming (this afternoon). (The low tone of the suffix /i/ affects mid tone verbs so that the sequence is mid - high - low. Example: a paai...he is killing.)

4. Immediate Future

Just as in English we say, "I am going to go to school." with the meaning "I will go to school soon", Kpelle speakers say "na lii li"... "I am going to go." This is not the only future, but it is often used.

subject noun + lii + verb stem

Examples:

a lii mi.

'He is going to eat.'

di lii lé.

'They are going to teach.'

5. Future

The future is expressed by:

subject pronoun + pài + verb stem + i.

Examples: na pài lii.

"I will go."

a pài mi.

"He will eat."

The negative:

Fe pronoun + pài + verb stem + i

Examples: Fe pài lii.

"I will not go."

Va pài mii.

"He will not eat."

This is used when we use "will..." in English and also the future senses of "going to" as in "I'm going to town tomorrow."

6. Past Tense

The ordinary past, used to refer to activities that occurred before present is formed:

pronoun + verb + low tone

(same as Hortative)

Examples:

e lono.

'He spoke.'

kú bá mii.

'We ate rice.'

Negative:

negative pronoun + verb stem + ní

Examples:

vè lononí.

'He didn't speak.'

ífe mii ní.

'You didn't eat.'

7. Completive

This expresses the idea that a process or action is over (completed). For example, water is heating and when it is hot, it is hot: nyái aã fãa - 'the water is hot.'. It is finished getting hot. In other words, a completive expresses a state of being which is the result of previous activity. This is the commonly used verb form for the useful verb kaa, 'see', which, in Kpelle is seen as a verb expressing an outcome. You have looked for or at something and the result is that you see it. The formula for the completive is:

-aa pronouns + verb stem*

Example: Daã lí.

"They are gone."

(*Some verbs with mid-tone are high-tone after a high or mid-tone.)

The formula for the negative is:

fé + níi + verb stem + ní

Examples: Difé níi lí ní. "They haven't gone yet."

Nyái fé níi-fãa ní. "The water isn't hot yet."

This verbal expression has a slightly different meaning, than an adjective - like form:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| a) <u>Nyái aã fãa</u> . | "The water is hot." | (Completive) |
| b) <u>Nyái fãái</u> . | "The water is hot." | |

Essentially the difference lies in the emphasis - on whether the interest is the outcome of a process or just a statement of fact. So in the example above, a) would be correct if you were waiting for the water to heat up; b) would be correct if you tested the water - it is hot or not.

8. Completive General

This differs in meaning from the completive (recent) only in that it makes no statement in itself about when something happened or how permanent the change in state is. The general form is not restricted to recent events.

na pronouns + verb stem

Example: a pá.

"He has come."

vs.: aà pá.

"He has come (recently)."

The negative is the general past or the completive (recent). However, with some verbs - like do, promise, agree, believe - this verb form is emphatic. It essentially expresses the idea that the commitment has been made and is not changed.

Some verbs - agree, promise, believe, do, etc. - sometimes use the completed action verb form for emphasis even though the speaker may be referring to a present activity.

Examples:

A fáa.

"He does agree." "He agrees."

"He has agreed."

Using A fáa for the idea "He agrees/does agree" is more emphatic than A fáai... "He is agreeing."

9. Used to

To express the idea "used to" when referring to a period prior to the last 4 or 5 months, you may use kaa (kana).

pronoun (present) + kaa + verb

Example:

e kaa ké a nélee.

"He used to do it well."

Negative:

fa + kaa + verb

Example:

fa kaa ké à nèleé. "He didn't use to do it well."

10. Habitual

This verb form is used to describe an activity or ability that occurs as a matter of course such as "I go to church on Sundays," or "I eat rice with pepper."

present pronouns + verb + low tone

Example:

Da Kpèleé-woo bô. "They speak Kpelle."

This can express the idea "I come every day." "You swim (every day)."

11. Stative

Stative is a term used to refer to a class of verbs which use a marker to indicate a condition of being: I sitting, I am standing, etc. For now, you need only remember three of them: sit, stand, sleep. "-ni" is always used in Sanoyea Kpelle. In Jorquellie, it is sometimes omitted.

subject pronoun + a + stem + ni

Example: Kaa seeni... "You (pl.) are seated."

As you might suspect, it is not the commonest verb form.

J

negative pronoun + verb stem + (ni)

Example: Ifé sēe (ni)...."You are not sitting."

12. Customary

This is simply the form of the verb used in discussing what is ordinarily or habitually true. In English we say things like "I speak English." "I go to school." These same ideas are expressed through use of the customary form in Kpelle.

pronoun + mid tone + a + verb stem + low tone

Example: Kwa kpēlee - woo bō...."We speak Kpelle."

Negative:

subject pronoun + fa + stem + low tone

Example: Kufa kpēlee - woo bō...."We don't speak Kpelle."

fa	I	kú fa	we
ifa	you	ká fa	you
va	he, she, it	di fa	they

13. Hortative/Consecutive

First; look at the uses of this form of the verb. It is used to express ideas like "we should," "let's," "have someone do."

Examples:

é lí.

He should go.

kú lí.

Let's go.

This form is also used for the second of two verbs when it expresses the result or goal of the first verb.

Examples: pá íqáa. Come and see it.
(Lit. - Come you it see.)
ná ḡwēlii ná lí. I want to go.
(Lit. - I it want I go.)

To form the hortative or consecutive:

pronoun + verb stem

These are the pronouns:

ná	I	kú	we
í	you (sing.)	ká	you (pl.)
é	she, he, it	dí	they

As you can see, they differ only in the singular from the other pronouns.

The negative is formed as follows:

negative pronoun + verb stem + low tone

If the first verb is negative, then the negative pronoun is not used for the second.

Examples: fēe vé ná. It's necessary that he not go.
He shouldn't go.
fé ḡwēlii ná lí. I don't want to go.

This verb form is also used for narratives (relating stories, etc.)

14. fêe

If you use fêe and a clause with the verb in the hortative-consecutive, then the meaning is that something is required. This is the idea we express in English as 'must' or 'have to.'

Example: Fêe í lí. 'You must go.'

15. yele da - 'suppose ... then'

A sentence beginning with yele da, with the verb in the consecutive or the conditional, carries the meaning 'suppose ... then.'

Example: yele da núu pá, ge, ... 'Suppose someone goes, then ...'

16. Contrary to Fact

The following verb form does just what the name suggests: used to tell of a condition or wish that is not true.

past pronoun + -i + verb stem + low tone

or

past pronoun + stem + i

Example:

gâi pá or gâi pâi "I wish I were coming..."

lôlon èi pá, èi "If the child were coming...he"

Note: if you add a third action (if the child were going, he could take money and buy it), then use the consecutive for the third verb.

past pronoun + -i + wàla + verb stem

Example:

èi wàla pá... "If he hadn't come..."

then in the main clause use:

past negative pronoun + i + stem + low tone

Note: alternatively the main clause may be: pronoun + i + fe + i
and/or the verb stem + i.

Example:

kufèi pà. "we would not have come"

This verb form can also be used to express "should have."

pronoun + i + pòri + stem + low tone

Example:

èi pòri pà... "he should have come"

17. The Conditional

Most often the idea expressed by this form can best be expressed as "when..." in English. Sometimes, "if..." will also be appropriate. This verb form is used to discuss something that has not happened or happens only sometimes, or is not specific.

pronoun + verb + low tone

Examples:

à mii

"when he ate..."

à kpàla

"when it is dry..."

Pronouns:

nà

kwà

bà(ya)

kà

à

dà

Negative:

pronoun + là + verb stem

(or wàla)

Examples:

à là mi-

"if he doesn't eat..."

à wàla kpála

"if it doesn't dry..."

Note: sometimes

ké + verb stem + i

is used for the negative form.

different in meaning. Example:

This is slightly different in meaning.

à là ké bá mi.

"If he is not eating rice..."

a là bá mi.

"If he does not eat rice..."

Also, past action is often expressed by using a relative clause for the when...clause.

18.

There are two other ways to express obligatory action:

- a. Maa-n̄ē + hortative-consecutive sentence means should do something.

Example:

Maa-n̄ē ná wúle' tóo.

"I should sing."

Maa-n̄ē ná li.

"I should go."

- b. Gáa sen + hortative-consecutive sentence expresses "need to" or "ought to."

Example:

Gáa sen ná wúle' tóo.

"I ought to sing."

Gáa sen ná li.

"I need to go."

19. To Have

In Kpelle "to have something" is generally expressed by using a verbal form of "in my hand".

Independent nouns:

X káa + possessor pronoun + yée + ì

This is equivalent in meaning to "I am having it in my hand".

Negative:

X fé + yée + ì

There are a few other verbals of this sort: they have both noun and verb characteristics, and a meaning of place and continuous action.

Examples:

tée káa nyéèi.

"I have a chicken."

tée fé nyéèi.

"I don't have a chicken."

mí bà ipo taài?

"Where is your home?"

(Where is the living place?)

20. kólon "to know" can also mean "to suppose" "to guess" or "to think."

- a. To express a meaning of "I know something (now)" use the hortative-consecutive pronouns and the verb in the stem tone.

Example:

ná nūui kólon.

"I know the man."

- b. If a sentence follows kólon rather than just a nominal object, then the meaning is suppose, or guess.

Example:

ḡá gólŋ a lîi. "I think she's going."

To express the idea of "know" in this context (with a sentence complement), kpɔ̀ à gɛɛ is used between kólŋ and the sentential clause.

Example:

ḡá gólŋ kpɔ̀ à gɛɛ a lîi. "I know (for sure, for true) she's going."

- c. To express a past meaning, the auxiliary verb *kè* is used.

pronoun + *kè* a + kólŋ

or

pronoun + kólŋ + *kè*

Example:

ḡá gólŋ *kè* a lîi. "I knew she was going."

- d. In all other tenses it has the meaning of "know."

21. wéli

Wéli has some parallel distinctions. However, in the present it is treated as a stative verb if you mean "like" or "love."

Example:

ḡá nūui ḡwélini. "I like that person."

If *kè* is used as an auxiliary with past tense, then *wéli* means "want" rather than "like." To indicate the "want" meaning is present, use the regular present.

Examples:

na òweli. "I liked her."

na ke a òweli. "I wanted it."

(Note: use weli in an adjective form.)

na òwelii... "I want to..."

22. Ke is used before the verb stem + -i to indicate intensification. This can take several forms - as it answers the tense for the clause.

Examples:

è kè pài. "He was coming."

a pài kèi pài. "He will be coming."

23. A kè is used when the speaker does not know whether an event will occur or not - corresponding to our "if." A kè is placed before the remainder of the phrase which is in conditional form.

Examples:

à kè à bá miì. "If he eats rice..."

à kè à kpàla. "If it dries..."

24. Kée is used to express the idea "while."

pronoun + kée + verb

Example:

di kée pài. "while they were coming..."

di kée miì. "while they were eating..."

25. The Conjunction ké

Ké is used to connect two phrases which have the same subject.
(These phrases do not express the idea of first one thing and then another - use consecutive for that.)

phrase + ké + phrase: verb with low tone

Examples:

A bá mii, gé seye pála.	"He eats rice and weaves cloth."
A bá mii.	"He eats rice."
A seye pála.	"He weaves cloth."

26. More Coordinate Sentences

- a. Fêe followed by the negative conditional or consecutive, but not at the beginning of the sentence expresses "except" or "unless".

Example:

Fe mii-sen, wêlîi fêe tuma-laa.
"I don't want any food except greens."

- b. If the verb occurs in another tense, then the idea is "before."

Example:

Ku pòri lii fêe é pá.
"We can go before he comes."

- c. If until is meant, use: kwa pai + clause describing first activity then second clause.

Example:

Kwa pai kulaa mii ku lee serii Gbomue.
"We will eat before we reach Gbomue."

1.b and 1.c may both translate as "before" in English. The difference in Kpelle is this:

Fêe "before" means that something must be done before the activity described in the second clause.

Kwa paî "until" or "before" simply means the action will occur before the action in the second clause.

CHAPTER V

KPELLE-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-KPELLE DICTIONARY

The process of writing a dictionary is a large and tedious process of checking and rechecking entries against usages not only by one speaker, but by many speakers. A good dictionary should contain samples of sentences to illustrate usage of the entry. What follows then by definition is less than a dictionary, but on the other hand it is more than a word list, for it does contain information on parts of speech, dialectal variants and usage. When using this dictionary the reader is encouraged to correct or modify transcription in the light of experience and to make additions when new words are identified.

DICTIONARY (KPELLE - ENGLISH).....a to búlo-kwelee

A.

- a
particle used in post verbal
phrases, often "with", "for"
"by means of"
- a
(contraction of káa)
- Àbē
Harbel
- âba
hour
- Àfeko
Ivory Coast
- à fūo
unconscious
- a gēē
in order to
- à gēē len
how
- a kē (conj)
in order to, so that
- a kē bālo
to be getting better
- a maa felaa
right away, immediately, soon
- à tǎi su-koya seye é lee kpee
a long time to get well

B.

- bāla
rattan
- bāla
bush dog
- bēle
trousers, pants
- bene
still
- bia
beer
- Bikāna
Buchanan
- Bon yeei ma
Bong River
- bōki
bucket
- bolie-zu
thin
- bolo-polo
old, ancient
- boron-kpalai
November
- bōyee (see pōye)
color
- búlo-kwelee
eggplant

bá..... bora-yale

B

- bá
bear fruit
- bá
cooked rice
- bâa-ke-maa
to obey
- bâa-kûlâ-maa
to disobey
- bálo
to cure, to heal
- bara
brass
- baraa-yêe-mei-yalee
to win
- barân
fellowmate, peer, friend:
pl. barâa
- bâre
trap: bâre tē 'set a trap'
- bé
part. (used to emphasize subj.,
obj., compl. and after question
words)
- bé (adv)
here: bé-pere 'this way',
bé nī mā 'over here', béi
kélee...naa (in phrase)
'wherever'
- bela (suff)
(irregular plural form of
núu): tīi ké-nuu 'worker',
tīi ké-bela 'workers'
- béela
black deer
- béle
respect
- béle-kpe-goi
(kpôara)
hate
- béle toli boo
to invite
- bén, bélen (Jorquellie)
chair, bench
- berei-bono (Jorquellie)
wall
- bese
sesame: bese-kao
'sesame seed'
- bó
speak, open
- bò (conj.)
(in phrase): ké bò
'and also' Also:
gé bò, è bò.
- bóa
knife
- bòi
wild boar, bush hog, pig
- boli
goat
- bólon
resemble, looking like
- bolôn
grave
- boon (variant)
arm
- boon wolo (variant)
armpit
- bora-yale
bracelet

boolo.....Dūkoo

boolo
grow

boolo
father-in-law

boolo-long
son-in-law

boro
hat, cap, bag sack

bosii kpaya-kpaya na
money bus

bovu
soft

bu gie ma
add

bui
pig

D.

da
and

daa-daa
doctor, nurse, medical
person

da kula zu
subtract

dala
dollar

dana
September

dee-gie
thick

denin
April

denen
pond, lake

Den
St. Paul River

dika
digger

digbo (Jorquellie)
small

Dōan loii
Lofa County

Dōa-na
Loma

donkōron
pawpaw, papaya

dōsin
dozen

Dūkoo
Monrovia

fáa.....fólo té-eei nūn mā

F.

fáa

answer

fāa

hot, heat, get hot: i kolo
fāai yā? 'Do you have a
fever?'

fāa

wind

fāa kēte

storm

fāla

cut, tear

fanā-bo

offer

fē

hand over, give

Fē yani

day after tomorrow

feere

two: di feere nōo 'both
of them'

féla

wage due for work, taxes,
tuition: dí í féla fè?
'Did they pay you?'

Felaide

Friday

félaa

a maa félaa 'fast,
right away, immediately',
ímaa féla 'be fast'

féla-fe

pay

fêe

must, compelled: fêe é pá
'he must come'

fêe

fan (rice)

-fêlee-zoo

nurse

fēna

mushroom

fene-sen

wild animal, meat

fēn-kpalaŋ

field (already burned)

fiē-fiē

in a rush, with haste

fii

tiredness: mvií aà
kpēe 'I'm tired'

-fiē

first

fólo

empty, vacant: sen-fólo
'dishes'

fólo

day, sun

fólo

shine

fólo a _____ tēe

_____ days ago

fólo-kpanāŋ

umbrella (sun shade)

fólo-laa bo yeŋe

dry season

fólo maa láa

noon

fólo té-eei nūn mā
afternoon

fólo tóo yele.....Giò lóii

G.

fólo tóo yele
sunny (sunshine time or
season)

gála
fence

fog
5¢

gãla
box, herb used to dye
clothes black

-fúle
lungs

gáli-kalai
May

fúloi
first

gálon
gallon

fúlon
come loose, loosen:
maa è fúlon 'she gave
birth'

gaméne
orange: gaméne-lon
'lemon', gaméne kpaya
kpaya 'grapefruit',
gaméne pele-pelee
'tangerine'

fulu
alive: fulu-sen 'living
thing', fulu-laa 'life'

Gan-taa
Ganta

gára
mat

gau-see gie-na
bone setter

gàu-see gie-na
set a bone

geên
crab

gè-zu-feere kwii zoo
doctor (M.D.)

Gîni
Guinea

Gilebo
Grebo

Giò lóii
Nimba County

Gio..... gbôno

Gio

Gio

Gisi

Gissi

gôl ~ gwêi

banana: gôl kpaya-kpaya
'plantains'

Gôla

Gola

gônôn

gourd, calabash

gotó

grasshopper, locust

goru

gold

golé-yalon-leei
January

golé-yalon-lon
December

guro-yale-núu
jeweler

Gb

gbâa

almost

gba béle

hat, helmet

gbai

corn

Gbâni

Bandi

gbêya

cutters

gbène fé lélee ni
unhealthy

gbene (gbune) kéte
fat

gbène-lélee
healthy

gbéhé polie zu
medium size

gbêe
who?

gbe kée
gourd

Gbeleé loi
Bong County

gbín
bed

gbínín pú ma
loom

gbôdo
leprosy: gbôdo-nuu
'leper'

gbôno
ring

gbolo.....yale

gbolo
green, unripe

yāla-pere
church

Gbôlo
Bassa

yale
break

gbonoi-léle (gòloi-pòno)
healthy

yalee
broken

gbôn-tolon
handbag

yálon
moon, month

gbôra
one-half

yāu
yams

gbôto
leprosy

yelê
day, sky, heaven:
yêlê dā 'someday,
maybe, sometime',
yêlê kête 'holiday',
a, yêlê-waia pepe 'at
daybreak', yêlê-kuu
'working, day', a
veere-yêlêi 'the second
time', yêlê-gbana
'thunder', yêlê-waai
ŋi su 'this morning'

gbômo
wasp

gbô-laa
a type of water green

gboro
rice farm before burning,
when all trees are cut

yelêi
upward, toward the sky:
iwôo tē yelêi 'speak
louder'

gbayyoi
July

gbûno bele
eddoes

yela-kolon
cloud

yêlê-waa
morning

yêlê-wii-fôlo
sundown, sunset

yêlê-wu(lii)
evening

yêlu
how much? how many?

yêlê
when?

yéle kâne

yéle
laugh

yeli
rope

yeli-kpòmo
nine

yila
dog

yili maa sêye
lâpa, skirt

yili
cook

yili-pere
cook shop

yiri
bunch, bundle

yiri
tie

H.

hâya (saa-ya)
rice bird

I.

ĩ gbeli
greeting

ikolôî ponoôî
Are you well?

K.

kâa a vûlu
alive

kâa búma
dead

kaa kolêi
to be sick

kâa saâi
to be dying

kaaka wûru
cocoa tree

kâan
shoulders

kaân-kau
feces

kafâlo
excuse me (to one person),
ka kafâlo. 'excuse me- (to
several persons)'

kala
grass, weed, trash,
chaff, peeling, scale
(of fish); ikala-
kalai 'you are hard to
deal with, stingy'

kala bô
to husk, to shell

kali
snake

kali
hoe

kâlon
chief, king; kâlon-laa
'chiefdom'

kâne
silver

kane-tōōn kona

kane-tōōn
tuberculosis

-kili
mind

kān
wall

-kili a gēē / a gēē -kili
remember (keep in mind)

kāpa
one cent, penny

kira
speed, hurry, haste

kara
spoiled, rotten

kiyēn
pepper

-kau
bone

-koi / -kui / -koo
stomach; goi a tēēi
'he has diarrhea'

(kéle)-lōō (tōō-lōō)
palm wine

koi kaa mā
to be pregnant

kélee
all

koi-kāna
constipation

kēlen
vehicle, boat, canoe, ship,
car, truck: koōn-kelen 'air-
plane', yā nā-kelen 'ship,
steamer boat', kēlen sia-nuu
'driver', kēlen-pere 'highway'

koi-nia
pregnant woman

koi-nyii gbeli
hookworm

kēra
uncle (mother's brother)

koi-saa
barren woman

kēre
palaver hut

koi ta nina
newborn baby

kēren
burn

koi-tēē
diarrhea

kē
do, be, happen, say: - da kē mā
'they call it...'

kolā
rice bag

kēlen-sia-nuu
doctor

kole
white: kwii-kole
'white man'

kēte
big, important

komo
basket

kīe
together, each other

kona
mortar

koon-kelen.....-kona

koon-kelen
airplane

koon-sen sale
insecticide

kóran
fence

kôya
long

kófe
coffee

kói
firewood

kole
nearness, vicinity

kole
sell

kole
cold in stool

kole
sick

kole a téi
have a chill

koli
iron, motor, machine

koli-yale-nuu
blacksmith

koli
open mole

koli-déna
screen

kolo

skin, book, paper, litter:
kóo ná-kolo 'shoe', kolo-
kpau 'pencil', kolo-laa
'sheet of paper', kolo-
pere 'schoolhouse',
kolo siye 'sue in court',
kolo poye-nuu 'clerk,
secretary, writer'

kolo bó
to peel

kolo-kolo
palover sauce

kolo-laa
page in a book

koloi a naa póno
to be recovered (was
sick, now well)

koloi pónoí
to be well

kolo-fela
illness

kolo-kole
bright

kolo-kúlaa
clean

kolo-pere-nuu
student

kolo-wolo
scratch

-kona
throat

kɔ̃hi seye kelen.....kwí-tou

kɔ̃ni seye kelen
train

kúla sáa ma
after today

kɔ̃lɔ̃n
know, learn, find out

kúls
sugar cane

-kɔ̃n
neck

kulu-lɔ̃
piassava wine

kɔ̃n
na kɔ̃n 'raise, bring up, rear'

kúluŋ-na
Kru

kɔ̃ɔ̃
where

kuraté
small (Sanoyea)

-kɔ̃ɔ̃
foot, leg: kɔ̃ɔ̃-pílanii
'beginning', kɔ̃ɔ̃-kwana 'ankle',
kɔ̃ɔ̃-yee me-i-pere 'on the left'

kuro-te (dèkpé)
little, small

-kɔ̃ɔ̃-gbua
toe

kuruh
Kru

kɔ̃ɔ̃-na kɔ̃lɔ̃
shoes

kuu-na
crew, work party

kɔ̃ɔ̃-yee-me-i-pere
(the) left

kúyen
potato

kɔ̃ɔ̃n
moan

kúyen-laa
potato greens

kɔ̃ɔ̃n
weigh

kwa-bo
brush (a fan)

kɔ̃pan
compound

kwa-sii-ee
brush

kɔ̃pu
cup, tin can, rice measure
ment

kwa-kelen
brushed farm

kɔ̃rɔ̃n
year

kwélee
bitterball

kula
take out, come out, get out,
surprise, come across: su-
kula 'explain', neni kula
'marry a woman'

kwéyɛn
necklace

kwí-tou
pineapple

kwii.....kpele

kwii

white person, European/
American, educated person:
kwii-kole 'white man', kwii-
tee 'duck'

kwii-toli

coconut

kwii-zoo

doctor (M.D.)

kpâ-saa

head tie, scarf

kpaa (mân)

or

kpaa

no

kpâla

dry

kpâlan

farm, field

kpâlo

piassava palm branch

kpanân

village

kpao

bridge

kpao

no

kpâra

head-tie

kpasa

handkerchief

kpawo

fishhook

kpâwo

bridge

kpaya-kpaya

big, large

kpela

became physically
mature (female)

kpele

drink, swallow, suck

kpelen.....-kpono

kpelen
yellow

kpelen-kēen
yellow fever

kpeli
earthworm

kpeli
remainder, rest, the other

kpēnē fāa-maa
(kpono kelēn-maa)
malaria

kpera
stop, beg, ask: 'kpera yē
'please, I beg of you'

kpete / kolo-kūla
clean

kpeye
opposum

kpelee
name of the Kpelle tribe in
Liberia: kpelee-nuu 'Kpelle
man', kpelee-na 'Kpelle people'

kpelee kēre
country kitchen

Kpelee-sale
country (traditional) medicine

kpelin
shake, tremble

kpenēn
mortar

kpete
fix, make, create, grow,
decide, get rich, circum-
size

kpinaṅṅo
'cooked

kpini
night, darkness: kpini
sama 'midnight', kpini-
seye 'nightgown'

kpiniṅ
wrap, fold, curl up

kpiniṅ
shady

kpiniṅ
region, neighborhood

-kpini (Totota)
kpoo (Gbangba)
-self

kpiri
bend

kpiri
load

kpiri-kolo
sandals

kpó-pere
latrine

kpolo
salt

kpólo
bread

kpolo-nyēē
smoked fish

-kpono
body, person, self:
gbonoi 'through him, in
his body'

kpòno.....kpùra

kpòno
log (to sit on)

kpòno-fāa-maa.
have a fever

kpòno kē-maa solo bôl
gain weight

kpòno maa-pāa
camwood

kpôn
bottom of anything

kpôn
door

-kpóro
ankle

kpôwo
path

kpô
very much: né lêl kpo 'very
good'

kpôara
hate

kpô kpo
hammer, "knock-knock" (one
says this word when arriving
at a door: equivalent to
knocking)

kpôlo
underbrush, thick bush, shrub

kpôlo
basket

kpôlu
red

kpôlu
red, ripen, dye red, ripe, dif-
ficult: meni-kpôlu 'trouble,
difficulty'

kpomo
root, vine

kpôn
crowd

kpôn
help, gather, collect,
pile up

kpôô
harvested farm, young
bush: a lí kpôôl 'he
went to farm'

-kpôô (Gbarna)} sàka
-kpôn (Totota)}
cut oneself

kpôô } wāna
kpôn }
hurt oneself

kpôrôn
rickets

kpua
short

-kpua
piece, section

-kpulôn
joints

kpuaa
short

kpune
whole, unbroken

kpûra
half, a part

la.....leyi

L.

la	it (substitute for a + noun when the noun is not expressed) it (in commands when noun is expressed)	-lāa-yá spit
		lāâi bed, sleeping place
-lá	mouth, opening, open top of a container, entrance, doorway, bank (of a stream), side of a surface (in English translated with prepositions by, at, next to)	layi shout
		lâi cold
		laie cold
lāa	place, set, put, trust, lay, lie down	láo soup (Liberian stew to eat with cooked rice)
-lāa	name	lé what
lāa	leaf of plants: tōu-lāa 'palm leaf', kōlō-lāa 'page of a book'	-lee mother (title of respect used with name for older person): pere-lee 'main road', pēre-lee 'head wife'
lāa kêle	sweep	-léya hair, feathers
lāa-kpaa	leap	-lêye younger sibling
lāa-lāa	sloppy	-leye-nēni younger sister
lāa mii-yée mei-pere	(the) right	-leye-surōn younger brother
lāa-nōnu	green	leyi pot, cooking pot: a leyi yilii 'she is cooking'
lāa-see	last (prior)	
lāa-seye / pèle-mei-sèye	lapa	

leyi.....lókura

leyi

pan, pot

leyi-yili-koli
stone

lén

how?

-lénéi

waist

lé

show, appoint, teach: sɛŋ lɛ-
nuu 'teacher'

lélé

grow, develop

lélé

good, nice, fine, beautiful

léléé aɲanaa
beautiful

lɛni-maa
now

lɛwo

breathe, breath

lí

go, take with

-líá

older sibling: níá-súŋ 'my
older brother, níá-nɛni 'my
older sister'

líá

to forget

lí bí

dirty

-líí

liver (center of emotion):
líí-sɛlɛŋ 'worry, anxiety',
níí nɛɛi 'I'm happy', níí
wánaai 'I'm angry', líí-
laa 'satisfaction', líí-maa-
wa 'pure in heart', líí-
kpele 'courage, patience,
boldness', líí-see 'peace',
líí-ma-sɛŋ 'treasure,
favorite'

líí

raffia palm

líí ma sɛŋ
choice

líí-nɛɛ

happy

líí wána

vexed, angry

-líí / -woni (Gbarɲa)
liver

líí tóo pólú (Káa yaôí)
afraid

lííyɛn

sweet, savory

loa

hoe

loai

between, the area in
between

loai ma

area in between, border

lókuro

baby, small child

lôlon.....luu à naa seye

lôlon
child; Pl. nia peles 'children'

lôlu
five

lôma
red deer, antelope

lôo
forest, bush, jungle

lômpo
room

lôu
mist, fog, dew

-lônii
children: pl. of lôn: kali-
lonii 'members of the snake
society'

-luu à naa seye
scab

lonii ma
right away, soon

lôno
speak, count: kôlô lôno 'read
a book'

-lôn
child

loon
squirrel

lô
enter, put

Lôba-po / vái loi
Robertsport

lôba wúra (māan wúru)
rubber tree

lôba yá (māan gá)
sap, latex

lôku ~ lôo-kuu
week

loi
land, floor, earth, ground,
soil: loi-meni 'tribal,
customary matter

loi peles
turn the soil, till

113

-mà mese

M.

-ma
on, surface of a thing

ma kan̄ / saa
carve

maa-fela-laa
set a bone: from maa-feja
"change"

maa koli
fence in, enclose

maa kori
study

maa-neēi
it is advisable, one should

maā-tin̄
late

maamu
spouse

maki
vaccination

māla
dance

-mālen
nephew

mālen / mālen-neni
nephew / niece

mānaa
over there

manaai
August

manan
cassava

manan-laa
cassava greens

manan-siaa
pounded-cassava, ready to
use

mano
Mano

mān
also, too

mahun
mango

-marê
question (in phrase only):
marê ké 'ask him a ques-
tion', mare-kee ké 'ask a
question'

mare-ké
ask a question

mela
strip

-mei
above, the area above
another thing

meni
matter, thing, business,
palaver

meni
hear, obey

meni-kpolu
danger

meni-kpolu à nanaa
dangerous

Menin
Mandingo

mese
sesame seed: Also base

mi mu-tai-ee

mi where
moloṅ-tē tǎi
rice harvest (season)

mii eat
Mone
Monday

milin trouser leg
moo
red, ripe

mina spoon
-mu
under, the area under something

m̃m or m̃m
yes (used as a response to greetings or to indicate you are listening)
mua
boil, sore

m̃o-nyii
measles
muluṅ
dust

M̃sa
Mano
muluṅ / muluṅ-kpolo
dust

moloṅ yala
rice straw
muluṅ-poro
soil dust

moloṅ
rice (uncooked); moloṅ-kao
'rice seed'
mu-seye
tall

moloṅ kao
rice seed
mu-tai-ee
blue

moloṅ k̃eṅ
seed rice

moloṅ k̃ere
granary, rice kitchen

moloṅ kpala
upland rice

moloṅ m̃oṅ
sprouted rice

moloṅ sia-p̃ere lá
rice mill

naa.....nii

N.

naa

there

-nào ~ nawe

friend (also used to address a social equal or acquaintance)

-nana

vein

nân

father, father's brother (also used to address an older person to show respect)

nân nân

grandfather

nân nāsaa-bōōlō / nēe nōnee

aunt, grandmother

nanin

skip over, step over, take over, overlook

nei

after a while; later

neyen

face

nēre

nail

nee

delicious, sweet, good tasting, happy

nēi

dime, ten cents

nēlee agēe ifē nia ma

it's important not to forget

nēmu

breathe

nene with nā
comfort, console

nēne

which?

nēni

woman, wife: Pl.
neyâd 'women'

nēni

ma yeke
dress

-nēn

tongue

nēn

boil: yā nēnōō 'boiled water'

-ni

(to indicate plural for few irregular nouns)

nīa

forget

-nīa

older sibling: nīa-
sūrōn 'my older brother',
nīa-nēni 'my older sister'

nīa

will, desire

nīa-pelee

children, pl. of ðōlōn
'child'

nīye-tīyei

June

nīi

(used with a as a dialect variation for a ke)
"if..."

nii.....nyuo-la

nii
yet, still

nyá mólōŋ
swamp rice

nina
new

nyále
cat

ninaŋi
next (as in next day)

nyēē ~ nyēē
fish

nini
shade

nyēē denēŋ kpētēē
stock a fish pond

niniŋ
shadow, shade

nyēē kolāŋ
fish pond

nina
cow: nina nini-ya 'miTk'

nyēē-kpala
dried fish

no
only, just

Nyēŋ-yēŋ
February

nōmu
stay (awhile)

nyie
groan

nōō
dirt

nyii
sleep

nūu-tēi-kwii zoo
black bagger

-nyīŋ
tooth

nuu pōlō-ŋa
ancestors, elders

nyīŋi
this

nūu-bēlaa
operate

nyīfī
that

nūa
men, people: Pl. of nūu

nyōmōō
bad, ugly

nūu
man, person: nūu-kpune 'human being'

nyōō
bad: (contr. of nyōmōō)

nuu-kole
Peace Corps Volunteer

nyōō
be afraid

nweei
October

nyōō
within the year

nyuo-la
mother-in-law

-na nweei

ŋ

-na
(to pluralize nouns):
gbelee-na 'the Kpelle people'

na
on top of, top area of a
thing

naa
contraction of nama
blood (only contracted form
used)

naa-bo
wake up

naan
four

nali
sharpen (a knife)

naana
a lot, much

nanua
my family

nan
then

nela
rabbit

nelen - yelen
fry

-nei
eyes, face, appearance

nei-ke mo-mò
smile

neya
sand

ni
this

ni
breast

oni
bird

oni kpêe
to scare away birds

onon
again

onon
fire

onon-tena
fireplace

onyia
guest, visitor, stranger

onsoo-koli
motor bike

onume
knee

onun
hundred

-onun
head, chapter in a book

onun
awaken, wake up

-onun-leya
hair (head)

onun tonon
100

onun tuc-pere
above

onun-soli
cold (fresh cold)

onwana
bitter: onwana-loo-nuu 'a
violent, wicked person',
lii-wana 'anger'

nweei
name of the month of October
(named after the call of the
bird kpala onni that returns
at this month)

owêipili

O.

owêi
yes

P.

pá
come, bring

paa
paa kée núu (body part) na.
sore, hurt
sore (body part)

pâi
pint

pala
weave

pala
sore

pâma-sii
paramount chief.

panân ma
yard

pâne
pân: pâne-kalan 'corrugated
iron for roofing'

pân
4 unit: pân tón - \$4
usage confined noways to the
older generation

pâra
swamp: pâra-molon 'swamp-
rice'

pâra-na sêye (paa-na hēn)
bandage

pâu
pound (measurement)

pèle
game, entertainment

pelen
straight

pene
turn, stir, change

pepe
way, road, path.

pèle
start, begin, bend over,
bend down

pèle
also, besides (in phrase:
é pèle...mā)

pèle
small: pèle-pelee 'small',
nania-peleei 'my children'

pême, lē-kau
star

père
house, hut, building

père-kpēya
thatch roof

père-laa-lei
house, enhance

-père
side (of one's body)

pii
porcupine

pilan
get down, descend, put
down, follow

pileti
plate

pili
broadcast (rice)

poà.....puu

poa
fruit, flower

pôa
lake, pond

-pôlu
bac of body, back

pôlu-pere
backwards

pomo
carry on the back

pono
clear, light-colored, fair

pokôn
picture, image, copy, imitate

pôlo
old, to get old: sie-pôlo 'old man'

pôloi
last (as in last month)

pôlo
spin

pôlon
tribal initiation school

pôlo
to spindle

pômûn
sprout, germinate

pôn
fell (a tree), cut down, chop

-pôn
spouse

pôo
to own

-pôo
dependent noun
ownership: mine, yours,
his
equivalent to possessive
pronoun in English.
use with a

pôri
can, is able to, ability
(to do something)

pôro
soil, dirt, topsoil, clay, mud

pôron
inside of a house

pôron-bô
house boy

pôye
write, mark: kôlo pôye-
nuu 'writer, clerk,
secretary'
design, color

pôye maa fâlen
dye

pôye pû ma
embroider

pû
pour, run away, empty out

-pûlu
intestines

pumu
ant

puru
hunger: puru kâa mâ
'I'm hungry'

puu
ten

saa.....séyai

S.

saa	die, hew, carve	sále-père	hospital
sâa	today	sale-père kête	hospital
sâa	straight, honest, just	sale-père lon	clinic
sââ	things: pl. of <u>sên</u>	sale-tii-ké-núu	pharmacist
saa ba	three	sama	gift, 'to give a gift: sama-sên, 'gift, present'
sâa yele'ni	this day	sâma	space in between or among objects, waist, middle, center
-sâabolo	one's sibling of the opposite sex, i.e. a man's sister	samâ-ya yele	rainy season
sâye	a dwarf antelope (the wise animal of the Kpelle folk tales)	same	root
sayîlan	needle: sayîlan sîye 'get an injection	samu	turtle
sayîlan-tée	give an injection	sane	bottle
sâla	sacrifice: sâla kûla 'make a sacrifice	sân	parable, proverb
Salaide	Saturday	saŋûla	calf and skin (of the leg)
sale	medicine	see	sit, sit down, place, set
sale-kau	tablet, pill	-seêi	a place to sit
sale-kpele	liquid medicine	séyai	coast, coastal area, coastwards

seye.....sen-kau

seye
clothes

sen-kau
money, change

seye-nina
new cloth

sen-kau solo-bos
earn money

seye-solo-nuu
tailor

sen-kau koi kelen
taxi

seye yee-koya
sleeve (long)

sen-le-nuu
teacher

seyen
clear up, melt

seere
shake hands, snap fingers

sele
elephant

si
plant: kwaa si 'plant
rice'

selen
shilling (used to be worth
20 cents)

sia
walk, rub, beat: kili-
na-sia 'to think', sia-sia
'walk about, stroll',
kelen sia 'drive a car'

seri
arrive, come (as in time
comes), reach

sia
argument

sêbe
talisman, medicine container
(hung around a child's neck to
protect)

si-sen
plant, sapling

seyê
thanks: seyê fe 'give thanks',
fseyê 'thank you'

si-sen bá (kúlââ)
pod

sêlen
hang up: lii-selen 'worry'

si-yâ
porch

Selon
Sierra Leone

sie
chair

sen
thing: pl. sââ 'things', mii-
sen 'food'

sie-polo
old man

sen-fôlo
dishes

sifan
borrow, rent

siye..... ...soo

siye

pick up, take, carry, take hold,
lift, move from

somoi

early

-sii

kind, type, variety, tribe

somu

go early, go right away

sii

spider

sonia

wives of a polygamous man

sii-sen gbin

hill

son

catch, arrest

sii-sen mōo

sprouted seed

sōno

corner

si-sen mōn

seedling

soo

horse: soo-koli 'bicycle',
soo-falen 'camel', wale-
soo 'donkey'

si-sen si kolan

garden

sōo

funnel

sii-sen si tã (yele)

planting time (season)

sōbele

shovel

sina

termite, bug-a-bug

sōbo

groundhog

sinaa

men: pl. of suran

sōlo

sew

sin

shore

solo with bō

get receive

sin

deep

Sone

Sunday

sin

dig

-son

deed, action, behavior,
guilt

sinan

iroko or mulberry tree

soo

pipe vine

soboo

early

soo

daub, hurt, injure, hit

soli

hurt, ache

sôo.....surôn polo

sôo
anteater

sûn
fast

sôo ~ sôon
price, value

surôn
man, husband, male:
surôn-loo 'small boy'

sôon
lock (on a door)

surôn } polo
neni } umbilical cord

sôon-ketêi
expensive

sôya
rice bird, weaver bird

-su
inside, in, area inside of a
place or object

su-kpanân
strong

sua
animal, meat

sûa
garden

-sûa
nose

sua kpálaa
dry meat

-sûa yá pú
runny nose

sûbêlê
yam-like tuber

sûloi
first

sulûn
waterfall

Sune
Sunday

ta tí

T.

ta some, any

taa town, village

taa-tulé-kpo
manure, fertilizer

táan one (used only in counting)
Also: táyan

taan-kpala
tobacco

tába towel

tāi time

tāma to be much, plentiful

tāmaa much, many, plenty

tāpi ké-núu
rubber-tapper

tāpia kōli
unburned brush

tāpin-kée
tap (a rubber tree)

téa pumpkin, squash

tée harvest, cut

téébele table

Teide Thursday

tela also, before

telān peanuts, groundnuts

tená coal

téya pump

té go up, climb, rise, raise,
lift, close

tée pass by, send, give,
surpass: nálon tée tí
'last month'

tée chicken: kwii-tée 'duck'

tée blow

tée kée é zaa
hatch an egg

tée-péé chicken coop

Téyeide Thursday

tei blacken

tei-téi one by one, several, a
few

tei-téi / tōnō-tōnō
once, one at a time

tí that

tian.....tôn

tian load

tii work, farm

tii-kelen
burn the farm

tii kelen tai
burning time

tii-ké-nuu
farmer

tiin charcoal

tiyi charcoal

tina or tuna
rain

tinaa
tomorrow

tinaa maa
spin

tinan
turn around, surround, delay

tinin
silent

tin
noise, sound

tisô
sneeze

tiya
taboo

tiyen
cross (a river), go across

tôli
call

tôlo
jealousy: tôlo kûla
'be jealous'

tôlon
pigeon, dove

-tôn
top (of a surface)

tono
guinea fowl

too
fall, fell, put on,
dress, shine

tôu
palmnut

tôa
Loma

tôko
young (note: this word
has a wide range of mean-
ings: fruits not yet
ripe, food that is
cooking, but which is
not yet cooked, etc.)

tôlê
cough: naa-tôlê 'T.B.',
zu-koo-tôlê 'whooping
cough'

tôli
palm kernel

tono
one

tôn
law

tôn.....tun

tôn
quietness, silence

tôn
bân

tôn
build, stand up, being rich,
raise, breed

tôn
wait, stop

tôn-sen (lôô)
rân

tôn
beans

tôn
cough

tôn saa
produce a cough

tua
spend a long time, behave:
tua-pere 'behavior, custom'

tua
scratch, bruise

tua
king monkey

tua
push, move over

-tue
front of, front area of some-
body or a thing

Tuide
Tuesday

tule
(in compounds): taa-tule
'domestic animals'

tule
kola nut, cola

tulun
garbage pile

tuma
fishing net

tuma
net

tuma-laa
greens, herb, vegetables

-tume
heel (on the foot)

tumo
shake, deceive, fool

tumu
cassava snake

tuna
rain

tun
news

vãa.....wólon

V.

vãa

greeting: vãa ké 'greet
someone (by snapping fingers)'

Vãi

Vai

vólo màa-làai
afternoon (see fólo)

vólo aã kúla
sun up

vólo aã nyii see
morning

vóloi à kúla
east

vóloi à yen
west

vòlo
black snake

Võn-sen-ma
Voinjoma

vuu-layii
March

W.

waa

wash

wãa (wãwa)
broom

waa gãla
bath house

wãla
thousand

Wêide
Wednesday

wêne
window

wêe
yesterday

wêe fólo pôlu ma
day before yesterday

Wêede
Wednesday

wêli
want, wish, like, love:
weli-ké-maa 'love'

wie
heavy

wôbe
urine

wôla
savannah

-wôli
ear

woli-kweyèn
earring

wólon
sour

-wóo.....yee

Y.

-wóo

word, voice, sound, language,
noise, speech: wóo-ké-sen
'letter', wóo-yeli 'sentence',
wóo-kpua 'syllable'

yá

buy

yá

river, creek

wóo

cry

yá nyá tēi
well

wóo-saa zu
sob

yaba
onion

wóo- wóo
a long time ago

yata-laa
water green

wúma-nuu
rogue

ye bu gie ma
multiply

wúo
palm oil, oil, fat, grease

ye gbin ma
weave

wúnu
new (things or people who are
new to a place)

ye lee laai
stay in bed

wúru
tree, stick

ye nemu a zu-wiee
breathe deeply

wuru-ba
fruit

yee
thread

wuru-ba-kao
fruit salad

-yee
hand

wúru-kau
stick

yee
hill

wúru-kolo
bark

-yee-gbua
finger

wúru-pogoo
logs, cut trees

yee-kete
mountain

wúru-tii-ké-nuu
carpenter

yee-kon
muscle

yee

say (used always with a
pronoun prefixed)

yêke.....zùedu

yêke
shirt

yifa
pocket

yôô
wet

yuôô
axe

yúo
ocean, Atlantic Ocean, lake:
yuo-na 'American'

Z.

zeye zu
choose

zie
ceiling mat

ziêi
ceiling

zoo
medical man, traditional
doctor

zólô
sew

Zozo
Zorzor

zu-kpalango,
strong, manly

zu-saa
lazy

Zùedu
Zwedru

DICTIONARY (ENGLISH - KPELLE)above to arm

A

	also, too māŋ
aboye ŋuŋ tūε-pere	also, before tela
above, the area above another thing -mei	also, besides pélε (in phrase - é pélε...ma)
action -soŋ	American yúo-ŋá
add. bu gie ma	ancestors, elders nuu pɔɔ-ŋa
it is advisable, one should maa-neêi	and da
afraid lii tóo pólú káa yaóí	and also ké bô
to be afraid nyoo	anger lii-ŋwana nii wanaai - I'm angry
after today kúla sáa ma	animal meat sua
afternoon fólo tē-εεi ŋuŋ ma vólo maa-làai	ankle -kpóro koo-kwana
again ŋoŋo	answer fáa
airplane kooŋ-kelen	ant pumu
alive fulu	anteater sôo
all kélee	April Dénin
almost gbáa	argument sia
also bô ébo gé bô	arm boon (variant)

armpit.....Bassa

armpit

boon wolo (variant)

arrive, come (as in 'time comes')

reach

seri

ask, beg

kpera

ask a question

marê-ké

at

-lá

August

Manaai

aunt, grandmother

nân ɲɔsaa-ɔɔɔɔ

née ɲɔhée

awaken, wake up

ɲɔɲ

axe

yuɔɔ

B

baby, small child

lókuro

newborn baby

koi ta nina

back

pôlu

back of body

-pôlu

backwards

pôlu-pere

bad, ugly

nyɔmɔɔ

nyɔɔ (contraction of nyɔmɔɔ)

bag

bɔɔɔ

kolâ - rice bag

banana

gôl

gwêl

bandage

pâra-ɲa sɛye

paa-ɲa hɛɲ

Bandi

gbâni

bark (of tree)

wûru-kɔɔ

barren woman

koi-saa

basket

kômo

kpôlo

Bassa

gbôlo

bath house.....boat

bath house
waa gâla

space in between or among objects;
waist, middle, center
-sâma

be
kê

bicycle
soo-koli

bean
tôo
tôon - beans

big, important
kête

bear fruit
bâ

big, large
kpay-a-kpay-a

beautiful
lêlê
lêlê ananaa

bitter
ŋwâna
ŋwana-lôo-nuu - a violent, wicked
person

bed
gbîŋ

bitterball
kwêlee

bed, sleeping place
laâi

bird
ŋoni

beer
bia

black bagger
nuu-tei-kwii zoo

beg
kpera

black deer
bêela

begin
pêlê

blacksmith
koli-yale-nuu

beginning
kôo pilanii

black snake
vôlo

behave
tûa

blacken, black
tei

behavior
-son

blood (only contracted form is used)
ŋâa (contraction of nâma)

bend
kpîri

blow
têe

bend over
pêlê

blue
mu-tei-ee

between, the area in between
-loai

boat
kêlen

body Buchanan

body, person, self
-kpono

brass
bara

to boil
nēn
yā nēnɔɔ - boiled water

bread
kpólo

boil, sore
mua

break
yale

boldness
lii-kpele

breast
-ŋíni

Bong County
Gbelee loii

breathe, breath
lêwo

Bong River
Bon yeei ma

breathe
nēmu
ye nēmu a zu-wiɛɛ - breathe deeply

book
kolo

breed
too

bone
-kau

bridge
kpaɔ
kpáwɔ

bone setter
gau-see
gie-ŋa

bright
kolo-kole

border
loai ma

bring
pá

borrow, rent
siyan

broadcast (rice)
pili

both of them
di feere

broken
yaleɛ

bottle
sane

broom
waa
wawa

bottom (of anything)
kpón

brush
kwa-sii-ɛɛ

box
gāla

brush (a farm)
kwa-bo

bracelet
bora-yale

Buchanan
Bikana

bucket.....cassava snake

bucket
bôki

build, stand up, to be rich,
raise, breed
too

bunch, bundle
yiri

burn
kéren

burn (the farm)
tii-keren

burning time
tii keren tãl

business
meni

bush
loo

bush dog
bàla

buy
yá

by
-lã

C

calf and shin (of the leg)
-saŋûla

call
tôli

camel
soo-falen

camwood
kpono maa-pâa

can, is able to; ability (to do some-
thing)
pori

canoe
kélen

car
kélen

carpenter
wûru-tfi-kée-nuu

carry
siye

carry (on the back)
pomo

carve
ma kanân
saa

cassava
manan

cassava greens
manan-laa

pounded cassava (ready to use)
manan-siaa

cassava snake
tumu

cat coal

cat
nyàle

catch, arrest
son

ceiling
ziê

ceiling mat
zie

center
-sama

chair
sîe
see-sen

chair, bench
bên
belen

to change
maa-fela

chapter in a book
nun

charcoal
tiin
tiyi

chicken
têe

chicken coop
têe-pêre

chief, king
kâlon

chiefdom
kâlon-laa

child
lôn
lôlon

children^a
lônii (pl. of lô)
nia-pelêe (pl. of lôlo)

choice
lii ma sen

choose
zeyê zu

church
yâla-pere

circumcize
kpete

clay
pôro

to clean
kpete
kolô-kûla

clean
kolô-kûtaa

clean up, melt
séyen

clear, light-colored, fair
pono

climb
tê

clinic
sale-pêre lon

to close
tê

clothes
seye

cloud
yele-kolon

coal
têna

coast.....crooked

coast

séyáí

cocoa tree

kaaka wúru

coconut

kwii-toli

coffee

kófe

cold

lái

laie

cold (fresh cold)

nuu-soli

cold in stool

kale

color

bóyee

come

pá

come (time comes)

seri

come loose, loosen

fúlon

come out

kula

comfort, console

nene (with na)

compound

kópañ

constipation

koi-kána

cook

yíli

a leyi yílii - she is cooking

cook shop

yíli-pere

cooked rice

ba

copy

pokôn

corn

gbai

corner

sôno

corrugated roofing

pâne-kalan

to cough

tõõn

tõõn saa - produce a cough

cough

tõlê

country kitchen

kpêlee kêre

country (traditional) medicine

kpêlee-sale

courage, patience, boldness

lii-kpêle

cow

nina

crab

geen

create

kpete

crew, work party

kuu-na

crooked

kpinañoo

to cross.....to delay

to cross (a river), go across
tiyen

crowd
kpɔŋ

cry
wɔlɔ

cup, tin can, rice measurement
kɔpu

to cure, to heal
balo

curl up
kpiniŋ

custom, behavior
tua-pere

cut, tear
fala

cut down
pɔŋ

cut oneself
pronoun + -kpɔɔ saka
(Gbarnga)
" -kpini saka
(Totota)

cutlass
gbeya

D

dance
mala

danger
meni-kpɔlu

dangerous
meni-kpɔlu a nanaa

daub, hurt, injure, hit
sɔɔ

day, sun
fɔlo

day
yele

day after tomorrow
fɛ yani

day before yesterday
wee fɔlo pɔlu ma

— days ago
fɔlo a tee

dead
kaa buma

deceive
tumo

December
Gole-yaloŋ-loŋ

decide
kpɛtɛ

deed, action, behavior, guilt
-sɔŋ

deep
siŋ

to delay
tinaŋ

delicious.....duck

delicious, sweet, good tasting,
happy

nɛɛ

design, color

pɔ̃yɛ

dew

lúu

diarrhea

koi-tɛɛ

gol a tɛɛi - he has diarrhea

difficult

kpɔlu

difficulty

meni-kpɔlu

dig

siŋ

digger

diká

dime, ten cents

nɛi

dirt

nɔɔ

dirty

libi

dishes

sɛŋ-fólo

disobey

báa-kúla-maa

do, be, happen, say

kɛ

da kɛ mà - they call it...

doctor, nurse, medical person

dáa-daa

doctor

kɛŋ-sia-nuu

doctor (M.D.)

gɛ-zu-feerɛ kwii zoo

kwii zoo

dog

yíla

dollar

dála

domestic animals

taa-tulé

domesticated (in compounds)

tulé

donkey

wɛɛ-soo

door

kpôn

dozen

dúsiŋ

dress

nɛni ma yɛkɛ

to dress

too

drink, swallow, suck

kpele

drive (a car)

kɛŋ sia

driver

kɛŋ-sia-nuu

dry

kpála

dry season

fólo-laa bo yele

duck

kwii-tɛɛ

dust.....enter

dust, soil dust
múlun
mulun-kpolo
mulun-poro

dwarf antelope (the wise animal
of the Kpelle folk tales)
sàye

dye
pōye ma fálen

tó be dying
kãa saâi

E

each other
kie

ear
-wóli

early
somôl
soboo

earn money
sep-kau
sôlo-bôo

earring
woli-kweyên

earth
loii

earthworm
kpeli

east
vóloi à kúla

eat
mii

eddoes
gbunabele

eggplant
bul-kwelee

elephant
sele

embroider
pōye pú ma

empty, vacant
fólo

enter, put

European.....feces

European, American (n.)
kwii-kole

European, American (adj.)
kwii

evening
yele-wu
yele-lii

excuse me (to one person)
kafalo

excuse me (to several people)
ka kafalo

explain
su-kula

expensive
sɔŋ-ketɛi

eyes, face, appearance
-ŋɛi

F

face
neyen

fall, fell, put on, dress, shine
too

my family
ŋanua

to fan (rice)
fɛɛ

farm, field
kpalaŋ

brushed farm
kwa-kelen

farmer
tiɪ-kɛ-nuu

fast (adj.)
fɛlaa

to be fast
maa fɛla

fast (n.)
sɔŋ

fat
gbene kɛtɛ
ybune kɛtɛ

father, father's brother (also used to
address an older person respectfully)
naŋ

father-in-law
boɔ lo

February
Nyɛŋ-yen

feces
kaan-kau

fell (a tree).....forget

fell (a tree), cut down, chop
pɔŋ

fellowmate, peer, friend
-barāŋ
-barāa - pl.

fence
gāla
kōraŋ

to fence in, enclose
maa koli

to have a fever
kpono-fāa-maa

finger
-yee-gbūa

field (already burned)
fēŋ-kpala

fire
ŋɔŋ

fireplace
ŋɔŋ-teŋā

firewood
kōi

first
fīle
fūlɔi
sūlɔi

fish
nyēē
nyēē

dried fish
nyēē-kpala

smoked fish
kpolo-nyēē

fishhook
kpāwɔ

fish pond
nyēē kōlaŋ

fishing net
tūma

five
lɔɔlu

five cents
fɔŋ

fix, make, create, grow, decide, get
rich, circumcize
kpate

floor
lɔii

fog
lūu

to fold
kpīniŋ

follow
pīlaŋ

food
mii-sen

to fool
tūmo

foot, leg
-kōɔ

for
ā

forest, bush, jungle
lɔɔ

forget
nia

it's important not to forget.....give birth

it's important not to forget
nêlêe a gœ ifé nia ma

four
nâan

four (unit)
pân
pân tano - four dollars

Friday
Felaide

friend (also used to address a
social equal or acquaintance)
-nâo
nawe

friend
-barân
-barâa - pl.

front of, front area of somebody
or a thing
-tûc

fruit, flower
poa

fruit
wuru-ba

fruit seed
wuru-ba-kao

fry
nêlen
yêlen

funnel
sôo

G

gain weight
kpono kê-maa solo bôl

game, entertainment
pêle

Ganta
taa

gallon
gâlôn

garbage pile
tûlôn

garden
sûa
si-sên si kôlan

get down, descend, put down, follow
pîlan

get, receive
solo (with bô)

get out
kula

to be getting better
a kê-balo

to gift, to give a gift
sama

gift, present
sama-sên

Gio
giô

Gissi
gisi-na

to give birth
fûlôn
maa e fûlôn- she gave birth

go early.....guilt

go early, go right away
sômu

grave
bôlôn

go, take with
lî

Grebo
gilebô

go up, climb, rise, raise, lift,
close
tê

green (color)
laa-nunu

goat
bôli

green, unripe
gbolô

Gola
gôla

greens, herb, vegetable
tuma-laa

goat
goru

potato greens
kûyen-laa

good, nice, fine, beautiful
lêlê

a type of water green
gbô-laa

gourd
gbekêê

greeting
vâa kê

gourd, calabash
gônôn

to greet someone (by snapping fingers)
vâa

grandfather
nân
nônân - his grandfather

groan
nyê

grandmother
nân nôsaa-bôlô
nêe nônêe - his grandmother

ground
lôii

grainery, rice kitchen
môlôn kêre

groundhog
sôbô

grapefruit
gamêne kpayâ-kpayâ

grow
bôlô
kpete

grass, weed, trash, chaff, peeling
scale (of fish)
kala

grow, develop
lêlê

grasshopper, locust
gotô

guest, visitor, stranger
nôya

guilt
-sôn

Guinea.....rice harvest

Guinea
Gĩini

guinea fowl
tono

H

hair feathers
-léya

hair (head)
-nɔŋ-leya

half, a part
kpúra

one-half
gbôra
gbûra

hammer, "knock-knock" (said when
arriving at a person's door).
kpó kpó

hard
yéé

handbag
gbóŋ-tolon

handkerchief
kpasá

hand over, give
fé

hang up
sêlɛŋ

happen-
ké

happy
lji-née
née
nii neêi - I'm happy

Harbel
Abé

rice harvest (season)
molon-tée tã

to harvest.....horse

to harvest, cut
tée

heaven
yele

harvest farm, young bush
kpōō
a lī kpōōi - he went to farm

heavy
wiē

haste
kire₂

heel (of the foot)
-túme

hatch an egg
tee kēē é zaa

help, gather, collect, pile up
kpon

hat, helmet
gbabéle

herb
tuma-laa

hat, cap, bag, sack
bōrō

here
bé
bé-pere - this way
bé nī ma - over here
bēi kélee...na - wherever

to hate
kpōara

hew, carve
saa

hate
bēle-kpe-goi

highway
kelen-pere

to have a chill
kolē a tēi

hill
yēē
sīi-sen gbin

head, chapter in a book
-nūn

hit
sōo

head-tie, scarf
kpāsa
kpā-saa

hoe
kâli
loa

to heal
bālo

holiday
yele kēte

healthy
gbēne-lēlē
gbōnoi lēlē
gōlōi-pōnō

honest
sāa

to hear, obey
menī

hook worm
koi-nyii gbeli

heat
fāa

horse
sōo

hospital.....to husk

hospital
sále-pere kété

hurt oneself
pronoun + -kpó wána
" -kpín wána

hospital, clinic
sále-pere

to husk, to shell
kala bó

hot, heat, to get hot
fáa
kolo fáai yâ? - do you have
a fever?

hour
ába

house, hut, building
pére

house boy
poroŋ-bói

house entrance
pere-laa-lei

how?
lén

how
à gèe len

how much; how many
yeelu

hundred
nún

hunger
puru
puru káa má - I'm hungry

hurry
kire

to hurt
sóo

hurt, ache
sólí

illness.....June

J

illness
kolo-fela

January
Gole-yalon-leei

important
kete

jealousy
tolo

to get an injection
sayilan siye

to be jealous
tolo kula

to give an injection
sayilan-tee

jeweler
guro-yale-nuu

injure
soo

joints
-kpulon

in order to
a gee

July
Gboyooi

in order to, so that
a ke

June
Niye-liyei

insecticide
koon-sen sale

inside, area inside, in
-su

inside of a house
piron

intestines
-pulu

invite
bele toli. boo

iroko, mulberry tree
sigan

iron, motor, machine
koli

it
la

Ivory Coast
Afeko

kind: leaf

K

kind, type, variety
sii

king monkey
túa

knee
-nũme

knife
bóa

know, learn, find out
kólɔŋ

kola nut
tulê

Kpelle
kpelle
kpelle-nuu - Kpelle man

Kru
kúlun
kúrun

L

lake, pond
púa

land, floor, earth, ground, soil
lɔii

language
-wóo

lapa
laa-seye
pèle-mei-sêye

lapa, skirt
yili maa sêye

last (as in last month)
polɔi

last price
laa-see

late
maâ-tinango

later, after a while
nèi

latrine
kpó-pere

laugh
yéle

law
tôn

lay
lâa

lazy
zu-saa

leaf
lâa
laa-kpaa - leaf of plants
tôu-laa - palm leaf

learn.....louder

learn
kɔlɔŋ

left
kɔɔ-yée-mei-pere

on the left
kɔɔ-yee mei-pere

leg
-kɔɔ

lemon
gaméne-lɔŋ

leper
gbôdo-nuu

leprosy
gbôto
gbôdo

letter
kɔlɔ

letter (in a word)
wóo-ke-sen

lie down
lǎa

life
fulu-laa

lift
tɛ
siye

to like
wéli

liquid medicine
sale-kpele

little, small
kuro-te
dekpé

liver (center of emotion)
-lfi
-woni (Gbarnga)

living thing
fulu-sen

load (n.)
tiaŋ
kpíri

lock (on a door)
sɔɔŋ

Lofa County
Dŋaŋ lɔii

log (to sit on)
kpòno

logs, cut trees
wúru-pɔŋɔɔ

Loma
tɔa

long
kôya

a long time ago
wɔlɔ wɔlɔ

a long time to get well
a tǎi 'su-koya seye é lɛɛ kpɛɛ

loom
gbiniŋ pú ma

loosen
fúlɔŋ

a lot, much
ŋanaa

speak louder
í wóo tɛ yelèi

love.....May

love
wéli-ké-maa

to love
wéli

lungs
-fûle

M

machine
koli

main road
pere-lee

malaria
kpene fãa-maa
kpono kelên-maa

man, husband, male
surôn
surôn-loo - small boy

man, person
núu
nuu-kpune - human being

Mandingo
menin

mango
manun

Mano
mãa
mãno

manure, fertilizer
taa-tulé-kpo

March
Vuu-layii

to marry a woman
není kula

mat
gára

matter, thing, business, palaver
eni

to become physically mature (female)
kpela

May
Gáli-kalai

maybe.....muscle

maybe

yele da

measles

mō-nyii

dry meat

sua kpálaa

medical man, traditional doctor

zoo

medicine

sale

medium size

gbene polie zu

melt

seyen

men, people

nûa - pl. of nuu

men, males

sinâa - pl. of surôn

middle

-sama

midnight

kpîni sama

milk

nîga nîni-ya

rice mill

moloŋ sia-pâre lá

mist, fog, dew

lúu

moan

kōŋ

Monday

Mone

money bus

bosi kpaya-kpaya ŋa

money, change

sen-kau

Monrovia

Dūkoo

month, moon

yálon

morning

yele-waa

vólo aá nyii see

this morning

ŋele-waai ŋi su

mortar

kpenên

konâ

mother (title of respect used for older woman)

-lee

mother-in-law

nyuo-la

motor bike

ŋosoo-koli

mountain

yée-kete

mouth, opening, open top of a container, entrance, doorway, bank (of a stream), side of a surface. (In English translated with prepositions

- by, at, or next to.)

-lá

move from

siye

much, many, plenty

támaa

mud

pôro

muscle

yée-kon

mushroom.....night

mushroom
fēna

must, compelled to
fēε

multiply
ye bu gie ma

N

nail
nēre

name
-lāa

nearness, vicinity
kolε

neck
-kōŋ

necklace
kweyēŋ

needle
sāyilaŋ

neice
māleŋ-nēni

nephew
-māleŋ
māleŋ

new
nina

new (things or people who are new to
a place)
wūnu

new cloth
séye-nina

news
tuŋ

next (as in next day)
ninai

next to
-lá

night, darkness
kpini

nightgown.....one

nightgown
kpíni-seye

Nimba County
Gio lóii

no
kpaa
kpao

noise, sound
tín

noon
fólo maa láa

nose
-súa

now
lèni-maa

November
Borɔŋ-kpalai

nurse
daa-daa
fêlee-zoo

O

to obey
bâa-ke-maa
meni

ocean, Atlantic ocean, lake
yúo

October
ŋweei

offer
fanâ-bo

oil, fat, grease
wúlo

old
kwatara

old, to get old
pólo

old, ancient
bólo-pólo

old man
siε-pólo

older sibling
-lía
nia-surɔŋ - my older brother
nia-nɔni - my older sister

on, surface of a thing
-má

once, one at a time
tɛi-tɛi
tɔno-tɔno

one
tɔno

one (used only in counting)
táaŋ
tayāŋ

one by one.....paramount chief

one by one, several, a few
təi-təi

P

one cent, penny
kapa

page in a book
kolo-laa

onion
yaba

palaver
meni

only, just
no

palaver hut
kere

open mole
koli

palaver sauce
kolo-kolo

opening
-la

palm kernal
toli

operate
nuu-belaa

palm nut
tou

oppossum
kpeye

palm butter
tou kpoko

or
kpaa
man

palm oil, oil, fat, grease
wulo

orange
gamene

palm wine
kele-lao
too-lao

overlook
napi

pan, pot
leyi

over there
mana

pan
pane

to own
poo

pants
bele

ownership: mine, yours, his
-poo (with a)

paper
kolo

paramount chief
pama-sii

particle.....planting time

particle (used to emphasize
subject, object, compl. and
after question words)

bé

pass by, send, give, surpass

têe

nalon têe ti - last month

path

kpôwo

pere

patience

lii-kpele

pawpaw, papaya

donkoron

pay

fêla-fe

peace

lii see

Peace Corps Volunteer

nuu-kole

peanuts, groundnuts

telan

peel

kolô bô

pencil

kolô-kpau

people

nûa (pl. of nûu)

-bêla (irr. pl. of nûu)

pepper

kiyên

person

nûu

pharmacist

sale-tii-ké-nuu

piassava palm branch

kpâlo

piassava wine

kulu-lôo

pick up, take, carry, take hold, lift,

move from

siye

picture, image, copy, imitate

pokôn

piece, section

-kpua

pig

bôï

pigeon, dove

tôlon

pineapple

kwii-tou

pint

pâi

pipe vine

sôo

to place, set, put, trust, lay, lie

down

lâa

to plant

sî

kwaa sî - to plant rice

plant, sapling

sî-sen

plantains

gôï kpaya-kpaya

planting time (season)

sii sen si tãï

sii sen si ye

plate.....put

plate
pīleti

proverb
saŋ

please, I beg you
kpera yê

pumpkin, squash
têa

plentiful
tâma

pump
têya l

suffix used to pluralize nouns
-ŋa

pure in heart
līi maa-waa

pocket
yifa

push, move over
tuāŋ

pod
si-sen bá
kūlaa

put
lɔ

pond, lake
denŋ

porch
si-yá

porcupine
pii

pot, cooking pot
leyi

potato
kúyen

pour, run away, empty out
pú

pound (measurement)
pau

to be pregnant
koi kaa-ma

pregnant woman
koi-nia

price, value
sɔɔ
sɔɔŋ

question.....red deer

Q

question (in phrase only)

-marê

mârê ké - ask him a question

mare-kêê ké - ask a question

quietness, silence

tôn

R

rabbit

gela

raffia palm

lîi

rain

tûna

tina

rainy season

samâ-ya yele

rash

tôo-sen

lôô

rattan

bala

raise

tôo

raise, bring up

kôn

gâ kôn - rear

reach

seri

receive

solo (with bô)

to be recovered (was sick, is now well)

koloi a naa pônjo

red, ripen, dye red, ripe

kpolu

red, ripe

môo

red deer, antelope

lôma

region.....room

region, neighborhood
kpīniŋ

remainder, rest, the other
kpēli

remember (keep in mind)
-kili a gēē
a gēē-kili

rent
sīyaŋ

resemble, look like
bōlon

respect
bēlē

rice
mōlon

rice bird
hāya
saa-ya

rice bird, weaver bird
sōyā

rice farm before burning, when
all trees are cut
gboro

rice kitchen
mōlon kēre

swamp rice
hyā mōlon

rice grain
mōlon kao

rice seed
mōlon kēēŋ

rice, sprouted
mōlon mōŋoo

rice straw
mōlon yala

rice (uncooked)
mōlon-kao

rice, upland
mōlon kpala

to be rich
too

to get rich
kpetē

rickets
kpōron

right away, immediately, soon
a maa felaa

right away, soon
lonīi ma

(the) right
lāa mīi-yēē mēi-pere

ring
gbōno

rise
tē

river, creek
yā

road
pere

Robertsport
lōba-po
Vai loii

rogue
wūma-nuu

room
lōmpo

root.....scarf

root

same

root, vine

kpomo

rope

yeli

rotten

kara

rubber-tapper

tâpi ké-núu

rubber tree

loba wûru

mãan wûru

runny nose

-sûa yá pú

in a rush, with haste

fié-fié

S

sacrifice

sâla

sâla kula - make a sacrifice

St. Paul River

Den

salt

kpolo

sand

ñëya

sandals

kpiri-kolo

sap, latex

mãan yá

loba yá

satisfaction

lii-laa

Saturday

Salaide

savannah

wôla

say

ké

say (used always with a pronoun pre-fixed)

yee

scab

-luu à naã seye

to scare away birds

ñoni kpêe

scarf

kpâsa

kpâ-sâa

schoolhouse show

schoolhouse
kolo-pere

scratch
kolo-wolo

scratch, bruise
tua

screen
koli-dena

the second time
a veere-yelei

secretary
kolo poye-nuu

seedling
si-sen mon

-self
kpin (Totota)
kpoo (Gbarnga)

sell
kole

send
tee

sentence
woo-yeli

September
Danai

sesame
besese
mese

sesame seed
besese-kao

set a bone
gau-see gie-na
maa-fela-laa

sew
solo

shade
nini

shadow, shade
ninin

shady
kpining

shake, deceive, fool
tumo

shake, tremble
kpin

shake hands, snap fingers
sere

sharpen (a knife)
nali

shilling (used to be equivalent to
20¢)
selen

shine
folo
too

shoe
koo na-kolo

shore
sin

short
kpua

shoulders
kaan

shout
layi

shovel
sobe

show, appoint, teach
le

ship.....son-in-law

ship, steamer
yá ná-kelen

sleep
nyii

shirt
yêke

sleeve (long)
seye yêe-koya

sibling of the opposite sex -
i.e., man's sister
-sâabolo

sloppy
lâa-lâa

sick
kôle

small
kuraté (Sanoyea dialect)
digbo (Jorquellie dialect)

to be sick
kaa kôlêi

small
pêlê
pêlê-pêlê
nania-pêlêi - my children

Sierra Leone
Sêlon

side (of one's body)
-pêre

smile
nêi-ke
mo-mô

silence
tôn

snake
kali

silent
tínin

Snake Society members
kali-lonii

silver
káne

sneeze
tisô

sit, sit down, place, set
see

sob
wolo-saa zu

a place to sit
-seêi

soft
bovu

skin, book, paper, letter
-kolo

soil, dirt, topsoil, clay, mud
pôro

skip over, step over, take over,
put over, overlook
nanin

some, any
ta

skirt
yili maa sêyê

someday, sometime
yele da

sky
yele

son-in-law
bôolo-lon

sore.....stop

sore

mua
pala

sore (adj.)

paa
paa kée núu (body part) ma -
sore body part

soup (stew or soup to eat with
cooked rice)

láo

sour

wólon

speed, hurry, haste

kire

speak, count

lóno

speak, open

bó

speech

-wóo

spend a long time, behave

túa

spider

sii

spin

tiíaa maa
pólo

to spindle

póla

spit

-láa-yá

spoiled, rotten

kara

spoon

mina

spouse

maamu
-Pôh

sprout, germinate

pomun

sprouted seed

sii-sen móo

squirrel

loon

stand up

tóo

star

pémelen-kau

start, begin, bend over, bend down

pele

stay (a while)

nómu

stay in bed

ye lee laai

step over

nanin

stick

wúru-kau

stingy

kala-kalai (lit., you are hard
to deal with)

stock a fish pond

nyée denên kpétee

stomach

-koi

-kui

-koo

stop, beg, ask

kpera

kpera yé - please, I beg of you

storm.....syllable

storm
fāa kēte

sunny (sunshine time or season)
fólo tóo yele

stove
leyi
yili
koli

surpass
tee

surprise
kula

straight
pelen

surround
tínan

straight, honest, just
sāa

to swallow
kpele

stranger
nōya

swamp
para

strip
mela

swamp rice
para-molon

strong
su-kpanānōo

sweep
lāa kēle

student
kolō-pere-nuu

sweet, savory
líyen
nee

study
maa kori

syllable
wóo kpua

subtract
de kula zu

sue in court
kolō siye

sugar cane
kulo

sun
fólo

Sunday
Soné

sundown, sunset
yele-wii-fólo

sun up
vólo aā kula

tablé.....three

T

table
têbele

tablet, pill
sale-kau

taboo
tīya

tailor
seye-solo-nuu

take out, come out, get out,
surprise, come across
kula

talisman, medicine container
(hung around a child's neck for
protection)
sêbe

tall
mu-seyee

tangerine
gamene-pele-pelee

tap (a rubber tree)
tapiŋ-kée

taxes
féla

taxi
sen-kau kōi kelen

teach
lē

teacher
sen-lē-nuu

ten
puu

termite, bug-a-bug
sina

thanks

seyê
seyê fe - give thanks
iseyê - thank you

that

tí

that

nyítí

thatch roof

pére-kpēya

then

nan

there

naa

thick

dee-gie

thin

bolie-zu

thing, matter
meni

thing, object

sen
sāa - plural

think

kili-na-sia

this

ŋí

this

nyíŋi

thousand

wála

thread

yee

three

saaba

throat.....truck

throat
-kɔna on top of, top area of a thing
nǎ

thunder
yele-ɣbana towel
tǎba

Thursday
Teyɛide town, village
taa

tie
yiri train
kɔni seye kelɛn

time
tǎi trap
bǎre
bare too - set a trap

tin can
kɔpu trash
kala

tiredness
fii treasure, favorite
múi aǎ kpɛɛ - I'm tired
lii-ma-seɲ

tobacco
taan-kpala tree, stick
wǎru

today
sǎa tremble
kpɛlɛn

today, this day
sǎa yele nǐ tribal, customary matter
lɔii-meni

toe
kɔɔ-ɣbua tribal initiation school
pɔlɔn

together, each other
kie tribe
-sǎi

tomorrow
tǐnaa trouble
meni-kpɔlɔ

tongue
-nɛn trousers, pants
bɛle

tooth
-nyin trouser leg
miliɲ

top (of a surface)
-tɔn truck
kelen

to trust.....urine

to trust
lãa

tuberculosis
kané-tõõŋ
ŋaa-tõle

Tuesday
Tuide

turn, stir, change
pene

turn around, surround, delay
tinaŋ

turn the soil, till
loii pelee

turtle
samu

two
feere

U

umbilical cord
surõŋ-polo
neni-polo

umbrella (sun shade)
fólo-kpanãŋ

unconscious
ã fũo

unburned brush
tãpia koli

uncle (father's brother)
-nãŋ

uncle (mother's brother)
-këra

under, the area under something
-mũ

underbrush, thick bush, shrub
kpolo

unhealthy
gbène fé lelee ni

unripe
gbolô

upward, toward the sky
yelêi
i woó té yelêi - speak louder

urine
wôbe

vaccination.....weave

V

vaccination
máki

Vai
vái

vegetable
tuma-laa

vehicle, boat, canoe, ship, car,
truck
kélen

vein
-nana

very much
kpɔ́
nēlēi kpɔ́ - very good

vexed, angry
lii wana

vicinity
kole

village
kpanān

vine
yeli-kpomo

visitor
nɔ́ya

voice
-wóo

Voinjama
Vɔ́n-sen-ma

W

wage due for work, tuition, taxes
féla
dí í féla fè? - did they pay you?

wait, stop
too

waist
-lenei
-sama

wake up
naa-bo

walk, rub, beat
sia

walk about, stroll
sia-sia

wall
kán
Berei-bono (Jorquellie dialect)

want, wish, like, love
wéli

wash
waa

wasp
gbomo

waterfall
sulún

water green
yata-laa

way, road, path
pere

weave
pala
ye gbini ma

Wednesday.....work

Wednesday
Wêede

who
gbêê

weed
kala

whole, unbroken
kpune

week
lôku
lôo-kuu

whooping cough
zu-koo-tôle

weigh
kôn

wild animal, meat
fene-sen

well
yá nyá tēi

wild boar, bush hog, pig
bôl

to be well
koloi pónoôl

will, desire
nia

west
vóloi à yèn

wind
fāa

wet
yôô
tūma

to win
baraa-yeê-mei-yalee

what
lé

window
wēne

when (?)
yelē

with
a

where
koo

within the year
nyôo

where
mí

wives of a polygamous man
sonia
pêre-lee - head wife

which
nēne

woman, wife
nenl
neyāa - pl.

white
kole
kwii-kole - white person,
European, American,
educated person

word, voice, sound, language, noise,
speech
-wôo

work, farm
tīl

worker.....younger sibling

worker

tii kē-nuu

tii kē-bela - pl.

working day

yele-kuu

worry

lii-belen

wrap, fold, curl up

kpiniŋ

write, mark

pōye

writer, clerk, secretary

kolo-pōye-nuu

Y

yams

yāu

yam-like tuber

súbele

yard

panāŋ ma

year

kóran

yellow

kpelen

yellow fever

kpelen-kēen

yes

owēi

yes (used as a response to greetings,
or to indicate you are listening)

nn̄

nn̄

yesterday

wēē

yet, still

nii

young (note: this word has a wide
range of meanings: fruits not yet
ripe, food that is cooking, but that
is not yet cooked; etc.)

tāko

younger sibling

-lēye

-lēye-surŋ - younger brother

-lēye-nani - younger sister

Zorzor.....Zwedru

Z

Zorzor
Zozo

Zwedru
Zöedu

CHAPTER VI

LEARNING THE SOUND SYSTEM OF MANDE LANGUAGES

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to provide a deeper basis for the understanding of the sound systems of the Mande languages of Liberia. Although every attempt has been made to reduce the amount of technical language used to convey the information in this chapter, it has not been eliminated altogether, for what is used is felt to be necessary for the presentation.

Nevertheless, what follows can be followed by an enthusiastic reader with no previous training in linguistics or language learning. For those seeking only further practice in the recognition of the phonetic distinctions found in Mande it is possible to skip directly to section F where there are listening exercises which may be carried out with the accompanying cassette tape. Then, if there is some confusion about the nature of the sound contrast being studied, the learner may then refer back to the section which discusses the nature of this contrast.

B. THE SYSTEM OF SOUNDS

A language consists of three major subsystems. It has an inventory of words known as a lexicon. It has a set of rules by which these words are arranged into sentences, known as syntax. Finally it has a sound system which consists of a set of discrete contrastive sounds, known as phonemes. Phonemes, or rather strings of phonemes are used to render words as sound images so that they may be spoken and understood. This chapter is about how those sounds are organized and understood.

While phonemes are written using Roman alphabetic characters, they should not be confused with the letters used to write English. These are non-phonemic, because they violate the principle that a phoneme

stands for only one contrastive sound. The following examples illustrate that the English alphabet violates this condition.

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Word</u>
s	s	<u>s</u> ee
	z	rai <u>s</u> e
	ʒ	mea <u>s</u> ure
c	s	<u>c</u> ity
	k	<u>c</u> ow
o	a	p <u>o</u> d
	ɔ	l <u>o</u> g
	i	w <u>o</u> men
	ow	s <u>mo</u> ke

Because of these discrepancies, English is not perfectly phonemic which means that it is not always possible to determine how a word is going to be pronounced (given its spelling) or written (given its sound). Because of these indeterminacies in the writing system of English and many other written languages, linguists have found it useful to develop a phonemic writing system to use when analyzing a language. This writing system is also of value to learners of a language because it eliminates the guesswork in reading and writing in the language.

When you first hear a new language, you will first note that it is made up of a series of syllables. The syllable is a good place to begin breaking down the sounds of language because all three major phonetic elements: consonants, vowels and suprasegmental features are associated with the syllable.

At the heart of the syllable is a syllabic unit which is generally, though not always (as is pointed out later) a vowel. Vowels are sounds that receive their distinctive acoustical properties through the resonant properties of the mouth (oral cavity) and the throat (pharyngeal cavity) through adjustments of the tongue, tongue root, lips and jaw. The various resonances produced by these different oral shapes can be explained by the same principle as the resonant sound produced by blowing on a beer bottle, though the resonances produced by the more complex shapes of the vocal tract are of course more complex.

C. VOWELS

1. Classification

Linguists find it useful to classify vowels by:

a) the location of the tongue:

1. Is it toward the front of the mouth or
2. is it toward the back of the mouth?

b) the location of the jaw:

1. Is the jaw closed so that the tongue is high in the mouth or
2. is the jaw open so that the tongue is low in the mouth?

c) the shape of the lips:

1. Are the lips rounded or
2. are the lips unrounded?

The reason for this classification is that linguists have found that vowels that share common properties, (i.e. high vowels, front vowels or rounded vowels tend to function alike as we will show later). The classification of the vowels used in the Mande languages in Liberia is given in the following chart.

	Front	Back	Back & Rounded
High	i	ɪ	u
High Mid	e	ɛ	o
Low Mid	ɛ	ʌ	ɔ
Low	(æ)	a	

None of these sounds exactly like those of English therefore the following equivalents should only be taken provisionally, to help you learn to recognize the sounds associated with the symbols. Drills are given in section F to familiarize you with the use of this system in transcribing Mande sounds.

2. Description of Individual Vowels

2.1 The front, unrounded vowels:

/i/ bee, neat, tidy, me

The English vowel differs from the Mande /i/*, by being glided, that is, followed by y a semivowel (see below). Thus the word bee when transcribed phonetically is /biy/. If you say this word slowly, you may sense the /y/ at the end of the vowel.

Due to historical change, English words spelled with an i (e.g. bite) are no longer pronounced with an i (ee sound) but rather an eye sound. In making the transition to the phonemic writing system you may confuse the orthographic i (eye) and the phonemic /i/ (ee).

/e/ ("closed e") day, take, say

The English vowel differs from the Mande e in that it is glided, like the high vowel, it is followed by a y semivowel (see below). Thus the English word day, when transcribed phonetically, is /dey/ or perhaps /dey/. You can detect this y glide by saying the word day very slowly. You will note that while you start on the vowel /e/, you end with the vowel /i/. In learning to say this vowel say it slowly and cut off the y "offglide". For many speakers, the first part of the vowel is lower (closer to a phonetic /ε/) than a phonetic /e/. You can approximate the higher and tenser /e/ by tightening your lips, as in a smile.

*The use of the slashes here is to distinguish phonemic transcriptions from orthographic.

Lorma and Kpelle have a definite suffix -i which when added to a word ending in a front vowel produces something like the glided vowels discussed above. This gives an opportunity to hear the glided and nonglided as contrastive forms.

<u>Lorma</u>	<u>indefinite</u>	<u>definite</u>
porcupine	píví	pívíí
road	pélé	péléí
house	pélé	péléí

/ɛ/ ("open e") bed, lead, red, better

The English sound is virtually identical to the corresponding Mande sound.

/a/ ("diagraph") bath, laugh

This sound does not occur in the Mande languages, but has been included in the list, because of the potential confusion between the written (orthographic) a of English and the phonemic /a/ (see 3 below).

2.2 The back, rounded vowels:

/u/ school, pool, tube, coo

This vowel, like the English iy is glided, but this time with the semivowel /w/ rather than /y/. Thus the above words are rendered phonetically as /skuwl/, puwl, tuwb, kuw/.

/o/ ("closed o") go, row, tone, toe

Like the vowel /ey/ this vowel is heavily glided. Again if you say these words slowly, you will note the presence of a w semivowel following the vowel nucleus (e.g., /gow, row, town and tow/.

/ɔ/ ("open o") caught, law, frog, log

This vowel is quite similar in sound and production to the underlined English vowels to the left. The only problem being that the ɔ sound does not exist in some dialects of American English. If,

for example, when you say the words caught and cot the same way, or cannot hear any appreciable difference between them, you are going to have to learn to hear and produce this contrast. Secondly, speakers from different regions do not agree on which English words have this open o sound. For some, words such as frog, log, hog, and so forth are pronounced with an a vowel, while for others they are pronounced with an open o.

2.3 The back (or central) unrounded vowels:

/ɪ/ ("barred i") just (see comments)

This is not a contrastive sound in English but occurs as a variant of the general unstressed vowel known as schwa, /ə/. Therefore it is roughly the equivalent of the second vowel in muffin or in the word just when unstressed.

/ɪ/ appears as a variant of the corresponding front vowel /i/ in Kpelle and southwestern dialects of Lorma, particularly following velar consonants (see below) which because they are articulated with the tongue back tend to draw the front vowel back.

Kpelle (ɲilɪŋ/ = [ɲɪlɪŋ] 'bugabug'. (Square brackets are used to mark variant pronunciations). The Lorma u, particularly the word su 'in' is sometimes pronounced with this variant, e.g. sɪ.

/ɛ/ none

/ɛ/ is the higher mid equivalent of barred i. It appears as a variant of /e/ in Kpelle and Lorma, particularly following velar consonants. (k, g, ɣ, ŋ). For a definition of "Velar" see section D2.1. Kpelle: /Kele/ = [Kɛlɛ]

/ʌ/ ("carrat") but, cut, put, hut

This vowel is found in some but not all English words written with a short u, (note the pronunciation of put, which has an oo sound rendered phonetically as a lax u written but not described here.

Like the two back unrounded vowels ʌ is also a variant of the corresponding front vowel ɛ in Kpelle and Lorma, particularly following velars. Kpelle: /kɛɛ/ = [kʌɪʌ]

/a/ hot, lot, hopper

This is the only low vowel in Mande, and should cause little difficulty to the speaker of English other than the tendency to confuse it with the written (orthographic) a which as we pointed out earlier is pronounced as /æ/.

3. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are sequences of a vowel and a semivowel which tend to act as a single unit. We have already mentioned the diphthongs /iy, ey, uw and ow/ above. In addition, English has the diphthongs /ay/ as in sky, tie and light, /aw/ as in cow and now, /oy/ as in boy, toy and noise. These sounds do not occur in the Mande languages. However, the sequences /ii, ei, ɛi and we now add /ai/ are found in some of the Mande languages but because i acts as a full vowel and not a nonsyllabic semivowel, these are generally not considered diphthongs.

4. Orthographic Conventions

As mentioned earlier the phonemic writing system is not in wide use for the writing of Liberian languages. For example personal names and locations have been rendered in standard English orthography. Because of the inadequacies of the English orthography to render certain Africa sounds, a number of conventions have been developed. These are given as follows:

Convention	Phonimic Value	Comments/Examples
ie	/i/	Bodegie = /Bodegi/
ue	/u/	Bague = /Bagu/
eh	/ε/	Zleh Town = /Zle taŋ/
ea*	/ε/	Salayea = /Salaye/
or	/ɔ/	Zorzor = /Zɔzɔɔ/ Lorma = /Lɔɔma/

*This seems to be a Lorma/Kpelle convention only.

5. Nasalized Vowels

A nasalized vowel is a vowel in which some sound is allowed to escape through the nose (nasal cavity) as well as the mouth (oral cavity). While nasal vowels exist in English they are noncontrastive variants of oral vowels usually derived from the nasalization of an adjacent nasal consonant spilling onto the vowel, as such words as moon, [mūwn]; soon [sūwn]; and can't [kæ̃t] illustrate. Nasalization is marked by placing a tilde /~/ over the vowel. In the Mande languages, nasalization is contrastive...especially in Kpelle.

6. Vowel Length

Mande languages have contrastive vowel length. That is some syllables may be longer in duration than others. This difference can signal a difference in meaning as in the following Lorma examples:

kálf hoe
másfíí chief

káálf snake
máásfíí corn

D. LEARNING MANDE CONSONANTS

1. Classification

In addition to the vowels, which form the nucleus of most syllables, are the consonants. They are so called because they "sound with" the vowel and are accordingly found on either side of the vowel. While it is common to find consonants on either end of the English syllable, s t r e n g t h, consonants in Mande tend to appear before rather than after the vowels. In other words, Mande syllables tend to be "open" (an open syllable is one in which no consonants follow the vowel, e.g., pɛ, lɛ, kpɔ). The one exception to this is the velar nasal /ŋ/ in 'Kpelle'. Some open syllables cause trouble for English speakers, because the sound ɛ does not occur in English open syllables. (This is the reason for the development of ea and eh as a way of writing /ɛ/: see section C.)

Furthermore, Mande allows very few consonant clusters in a syllable initial position (before the vowel). These clusters only involve /l/, (as in /Flomo/, 'personal name' and as in /kwele/ 'big.')

The consonants of the Mande languages are given in tabular form below:

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labio Velar
STOPS:					
Voiceless	p	t	č	k	kp
Voiced	b	d	j	g	
IMPLOSIVES:	ɓ	ɗ			gb
FRICATIVES:					
Voiceless	f	s	š		
Voiced	β	z	ž	ɣ	
NASALS:	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	ɲm
LIQUIDS:		l, r			
SEMI VOWELS:			y		w

These sounds have been arranged in such a way that the rows and columns

contain similar classes of sounds. For example, it was pointed out in the preceding section that the front vowels (/i, e and ε/) were often backed (converted to ɨ, ɛ̃ and ɛ̃ respectively) or that vowels tended to be nasalized following a nasal consonant. These terms, of course do not have to be learned, though they may be useful in helping you understand the pronunciation of these sounds.

2. Points of Articulation

Part of the production of a consonant involves either the complete or partial obstruction of the flow of air in the oral cavity. This is accomplished through bringing an articulator, lower lip, or the front, mid or back of the tongue into proximity with a point of articulation associated with the upper part of the mouth. These points of articulation are discussed below. Individual sounds will be discussed later.

2.1 Labial:

The term labial means "pertaining to the lips." There are two types of possible labial articulation: bilabial (both lips) /p, b, and ɸ/ and labial dental (lower lip and upper teeth) /f, and v/.

2.2 Dental:

Dental articulations involve moving the front part of the tongue behind the upper teeth as in /t, d, ʃ, z, n, r and l/.

2.3 Palatal:

While these sounds are rare in Mande languages they do occur. They are produced by bringing the mid part of the tongue in the hard palate region as in /č, ǰ, ǰ̃, ǰ̃̃, ñ and y/.

2.4 Velar:

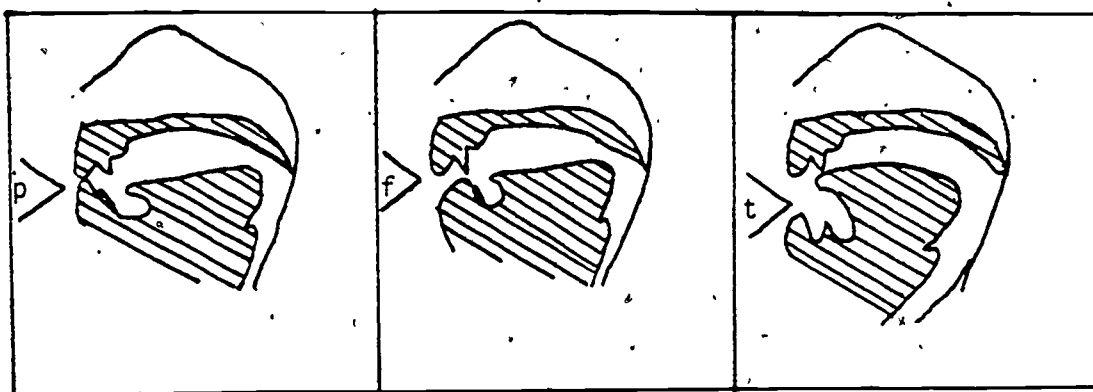
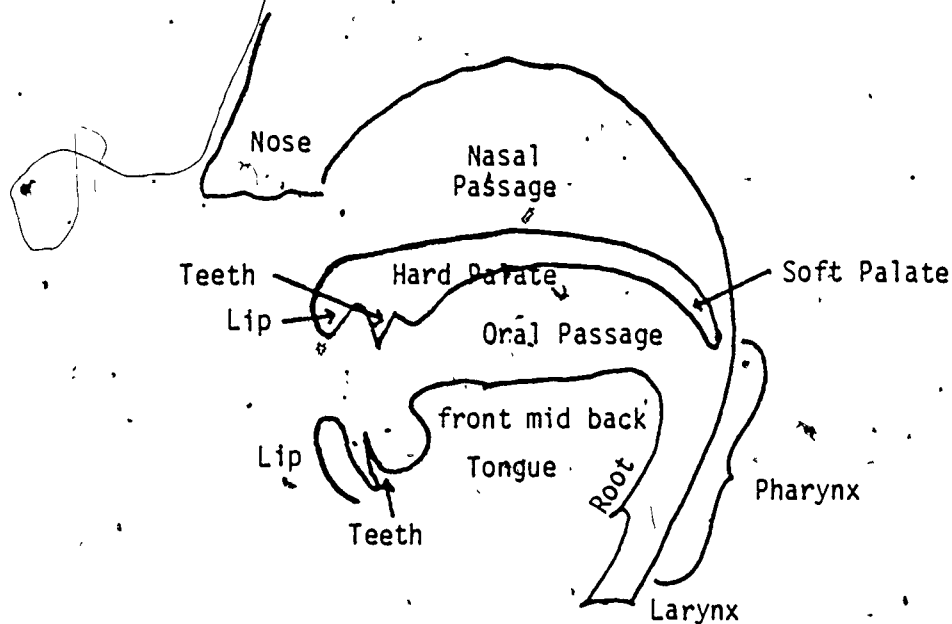
This sound is produced by raising the back of the tongue to the region of the soft palate as in /k, g, ɣ, ŋ/.

2.5 Labio-Velar:

This sound is the most difficult sound for speakers of English to master. First it involves the simultaneous articulation of a labial and a velar. It is as though you were trying to say cookpot or lugbolt but with open syllables (e.g. coo-kpot and lu-gbolt). Secondly, these sounds are often pronounced with ingressive air (the air moves into the mouth during the first moments of articulation before it is followed by egressive air from the lungs (the normal mode). This implosion is more typical of gb than kp.

3. Picturing the Points of Articulation.

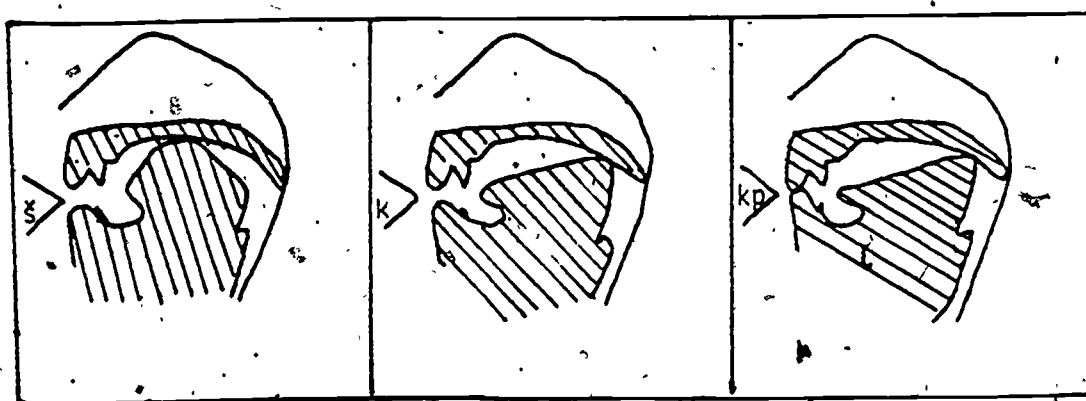
The following cross sections of the human vocal apparatus may prove useful in understanding how the various points of articulation are located.



Bilabial Stop

Labial-Dental

Dental



Palatal

Velar

Labio-Velar

4. Manner of Articulation

Sounds can also be classified by how they are produced at the point of articulation. This is called the manner of articulation.

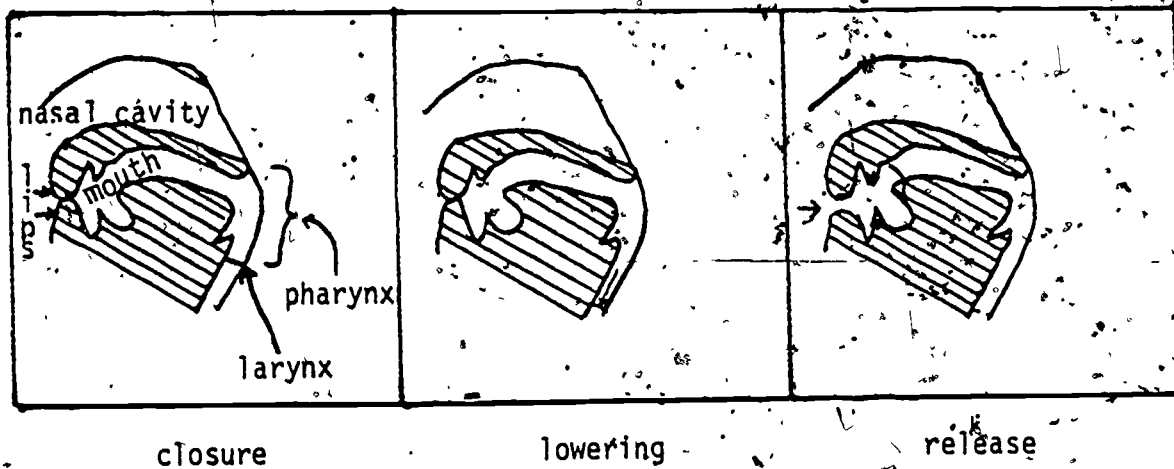
4.1 Obstruents:

Obstruents are sounds which involve a radical obstruction of the air stream, either complete blockage as in stops or partial blockage as in fricatives. Obstruents may be either voiced or voiceless which means that the vocal cords are either vibrating or not respectively. You can detect the difference between voicing and nonvoicing either by putting your fingers on your larynx (Adam's apple) or in your ears while you are saying these sounds. You will no doubt notice that in English, the fricatives /f/ and /z/ are more heavily voiced than the stops /b, d and g/. This is because in English, the voiceless stops /p, t, and k/ are heavily aspirated. This means that they are followed by a puff of air (capable of blowing out a candle) which devoices the beginning of the following vowel. Because the aspiration also serves to distinguish English voiceless vowels, the voicing distinction is not crucial. Fortunately for English speakers, the voiceless obstruents of Mande are also aspirated, though not as heavily. The two sounds /č/ and /ǰ/ listed as palatal stops in the previous illustration are actually affricates. This means that phonetically they consist of a stop followed by a fricative [tʃ] and [dʒ] respectively. However because they function as a unit, they are given the unitary symbols /č/ and /ǰ/.

4.2 Implosives:

The normal manner of articulation involves the use of (egressive) air coming from the lungs. In the articulation of implosives, air is drawn into the mouth by creating a partial vacuum in the pharynx by first closing it off at either end by making a velar, dental or labial stop at one end and a glottal stop (closing the larynx) at the other end. Then the pharynx is stretched by lowering the larynx and in so doing creating a partial vacuum in the pharynx. Thus when the

stop is articulated, for a brief moment, air will rush into the mouth briefly giving it its distinctive sound before the egressive air from the lung resumes.



The remaining set of consonants, the nasals, semi-consonants and semivowels are all voiced. Nasals can best be defined as voiced stops with the added feature of the opening up of the nasal passage.

The semi-consonants and the semivowels are like the nasals are resonant which means that there is less obstruction of the air stream than in the case of the stops and fricatives (known collectively as obstruents). The lack of obstruction allows the vocal tract to resonate giving the nasals, semi-consonants and semivowels their distinctive acoustical character.

Unlike the nasals where the resonance is produced in the nasal cavity, the resonance of the semi-segments is produced in the oral cavity. Semi-consonants are distinguished from semivowels in that semi-consonants are considered less obstructed or weakened consonants while the semivowels are considered more obstructed than true vowels.

4.3 Sonorants:

The remaining sets of consonants are called sonorant because in addition to having an oral obstruction of some sort they also have

resonance. For example in the nasals, the way is opened for sound to move into the nasal cavity which is a resonant chamber. In the case of the liquid *l*, the air is permitted to escape around the sides of the tongue producing resonance. And finally, in the case of the semivowels */y/* and */w/* which are nonsyllabic vowels, (*i* and *u* respectively) the resonance is merely dampened. Sonorants, which also include all the vowels are generally voiced. All sonorants have the capacity to be syllabic. As pointed out above the syllabic equivalents of */y/* and */w/* are */i/* and */u/* respectively. Other syllabic sonorants can be marked by placing an apostrophe directly under the segment. In the Mande languages nasals are often syllabic as in Kpelle: *mbulú*, Bani: *ndambangi*. Lorma once had these sounds but they have since been lost.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

Much of what was presented here was quite technical and beyond what you really need to know to learn a Mande language. Yet it was presented for a number of reasons:

- (1) it may help you to better understand how the consonant system of a language is structured
- (2) that Mande languages are an interesting and fruitful area of scientific inquiry
- (3) and because we thought you'd like to know.

E. MANDE SUPRASEGMENTALS

1. Classifications

In addition to consonants and vowels, a syllable may also possess a number of characteristic features called suprasegmentals. They are so called because their distinctiveness may transcend a single segment.

Features often considered to be suprasegmental are stress or syllable prominence, tone, vowel length and nasalization. Vowel length and nasalization have been presented in the section on vowels.

2. Stress

While stress is generally non-contrastive in Mande it is generally distinctive. In Kpelle, it falls on the first high-toned syllable in the word, or if the word has no high tones, it falls on the first syllable. Stress is acoustically marked by an increase in the loudness of the syllable and is often accompanied by a slight increase in the length of the syllable.

3. Tone

Tone in Mande is characterized by relative pitch. That is a high tone is relatively higher in pitch than a low tone and vice versa. No Mande language has more than three distinctive pitch levels. Kpelle and Mano have three: high, mid and low, while Lorma and Manya have two. The following contrasts are from Kpelle:

high	pélé	'house'
mid	pēlē	'road'
low	bēlē	'trousers'

The remaining Mande languages have only two level tones, high and low. The above contrasts appear in Mende as follows:

high	pélé	'house'
low high	pēlē	'road'
low	bēlē	'trousers'

In Lorma due to some historical change, the tones of the above words are 'high, though the different words to exert an influence on the following word as the following examples show.

pélé	'house'	péléniinë	'new house'
pélé	'road'	péléniinë	'new-road'
bélé	'trousers'	béléniinë	'new trousers'

3.1 Contour Tones

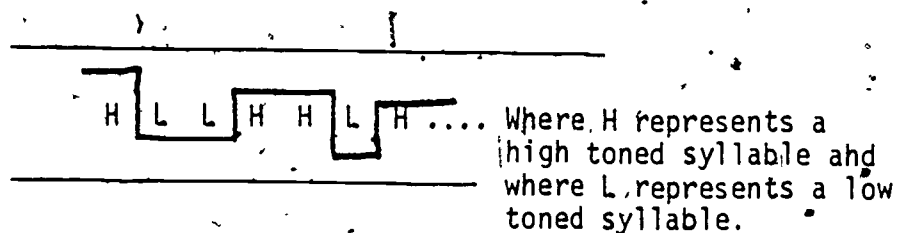
Contour tones are tones that actually rise or fall, rather than remain at the same pitch throughout the syllable. When these tones appear on a single syllable, they are written as follows:

falling	ŵ	Kpelle: bú	'owl'	Mende: mbû	'owl'
rising	ṽ	Kpelle: mṽlṽṽ	'rice'	Mende: mbă	'rice'

Rising tones and falling tones are heard in Lorma as sentence level intonations: A comma or a question mark following a low tone will produce a rising tone. A period following a high tone will produce a falling tone. Since this is not a property of the word, and since the tonal influence is really marked by the punctuations, these rising and falling tones are not otherwise marked.

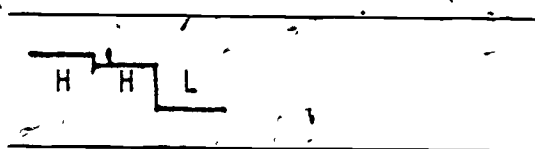
3.2 Down-Drift and Down-Step

In most Mande languages there is some downdrift and downstep. Downdrift is a general condition where a high tone following a string of one or more low tones is not as high in absolute pitch as the high tone preceding the low tone. Graphically this condition can be shown as follows:



3.3 Downstep

Downstep is very much like downdrift except here the lowered high follows a high tone directly. It is as though the intervening low tones were lost. Downstepped high tones are marked with an apostrophe before the high-toned syllable as in the following graphic example:



Downstep is not found in Lorma and has only a limited distribution in Kpelle where it occurs only at the end of sentences.

4. Word Types

Although not strictly speaking suprasegmental, it is worth mentioning that Mande words have definite phonological shapes. As mentioned earlier Mande syllables tend to be open and preceded by a single consonant. Such a syllable structure can be represented as CV where consonants are represented by the symbol C and vowels by V.

Pronouns, postpositions and verbal particles tend to be monosyllabic while nouns and verbs tend to be bisyllabic; words containing more than two syllables are either borrowings or morphologically complex (composed of more than one word). Given these facts, the learner can say a lot about the nature of the word simply on the basis of its phonological shape.

F. LISTENING AND TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISES

The following exercises have been recorded on tape. They are constructed in such a way that you may either do them orally, by covering up the answer with a card, or you may practice writing down the answers either in the space provided, or preferably on a sheet of scratch paper. Please note, that while these exercises will give you a general ability to recognize and transcribe these sounds you will find that additional work will be necessary with your target language before you can hear them clearly.

The Vowels

1. e vrs ey (If the vowel is glided write /ey/ while if it is not, write /e/.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ ey | 11. <u>s m</u> sem |
| 2. _____ e | 12. <u>s m</u> seym |
| 3. _____ e | 13. <u>l</u> le |
| 4. _____ ey | 14. <u>l</u> ley |
| 5. <u>b t</u> bat | 15. <u>s s</u> sesey |
| 6. <u>b t</u> beyt | 16. <u>t l</u> teyle |
| 7. <u>f t</u> feyl | 17. <u>m m</u> meme |
| 8. <u>f l</u> fel | 18. <u>k t</u> kete |
| 9. <u>p n</u> peyn | 19. <u>s</u> sey |
| 10. <u>p n</u> pen | 20. <u>s</u> se |

2. i vrs e

1. _____ i
2. _____ e
3. _____ e
4. _____ i
5. s _____ si
6. s _____ se
7. t _____ te
8. t _____ te
9. t _____ ti
10. l _____ le

11. l _____ li
12. p l _____ pele
13. p l _____ pili
14. p z _____ pize
15. p z _____ pizi
16. f l _____ fili
17. f l _____ feli
18. f l _____ file
19. l p _____ lepe
20. l l _____ lili

3. e vrs e vrs i

1. _____ e
2. _____ e
3. _____ e
4. _____ e
5. _____ i
6. _____ e
7. _____ e
8. s _____ se
9. s _____ se
10. s _____ si

11. p l _____ pele
12. p l _____ pele
13. p l _____ pili
14. p l _____ pile
15. p l _____ peli
16. p l _____ pele
17. s l _____ selei
18. t l _____ telei
19. t l _____ tile
20. p l _____ pele

4. o vrs ow

1. _____ o
2. _____ ow
3. _____ ow
4. _____ o
5. g go
6. g gow
7. s sow
8. s so
9. t tow
10. t to

11. t n town
12. t to
13. f l folo
14. f l folow
15. k l kolo
16. k l kole
17. k koo
18. k kow
19. m l molo
20. b n bono

5. o vrs u

1. _____ o
2. _____ u
3. _____ o
4. _____ o
5. _____ u
6. g go
7. l lo
8. l lu
9. t l tolo
10. p l pulu

11. f l m folomo
12. g l gulu
13. g l gulo
14. k l kolo
15. k l kolu
16. m l mulu
17. m l molu
18. n w nowo
19. n w nowu
20. t too

6. o vrs o vrs

1. _____ o
2. _____ o
3. _____ o
4. _____ o
5. _____ o
6. _____ o
7. t _____ to
8. t _____ to
9. g _____ go
10. g _____ go

11. g l _____ golo
12. k l _____ kolo
13. k l _____ kolo
14. g l _____ gulu
15. g l _____ golo
16. t l _____ tolo
17. t l _____ tulo
18. t l _____ tolu
19. p l _____ polu
20. p l _____ polu

7. a vrs o

1. _____ a
2. _____ o
3. _____ a
4. _____ o
5. p _____ pa
6. p _____ po
7. p l _____ polo
8. p l _____ pala
9. t l _____ tola
10. t l _____ talo

11. t l _____ talai
12. p l _____ poloi
13. p l _____ polu
14. p l _____ palu
15. p l _____ palo
16. p l _____ pola
17. p l _____ pola
18. p l _____ palo
19. k p _____ kopo
20. k p _____ kapa

8. Λ vrs a vrs ë

1. _____ a
2. _____ Λ
3. _____ a
4. _____ a
5. b _____ ba
6. b _____ bΛ
7. b l _____ ba^la
8. b l _____ bΛ^lΛ
9. p l _____ pala
10. p l _____ pΛ^lu

11. t l _____ tala
12. t l _____ tΛ^le
13. t l _____ tē^lë
14. g l _____ gΛ^lΛ
15. g l _____ gē^lë
16. g l _____ gala
17. p _____ pa
18. p _____ pë
19. p _____ pΛ
20. p _____ pë

9. Λ vrs ë vrs i

1. _____ bΛ
2. _____ bë
3. _____ bⁱ
4. _____ gⁱ
5. _____ gë
6. _____ gë
7. _____ sΛ
8. _____ së
9. _____ së
10. _____ sⁱ

11. _____ kⁱ
12. _____ kΛ
13. _____ kⁱ
14. _____ kë
15. _____ fë
16. _____ fⁱ
17. _____ fΛ
18. _____ fa
19. _____ fë
20. _____ tⁱ

10. Λ vrs ë vrs ÷ vrs e vrs ε

1. _____ tɛɛ

2. _____ tɛɛ

3. _____ geɛ

4. _____ gɛɛ

5. _____ kɛɛ

6. _____ kɛɛ

7. _____ keɛ

8. _____ kɛɛ

9. _____ kɛɛ

10. _____ keɛ

11. _____ mɛ

12. _____ me

13. _____ mi

14. _____ mɛ

15. _____ bɛ

16. _____ ti

17. _____ sɛ

18. _____ fɛ

19. _____ fe

20. _____ gɛ

Mande Consonants

The following consonants should give you little difficulty and for that reason no drills are given: p, t, k, b, d, g, f, v, s, z, m, n, l, y and w.

11. kp vrs p vrs k

1. _____ ka

2. _____ pa

3. _____ kpa

4. _____ kpa

5. _____ ka

6. _____ pa

7. _____ kpe

8. _____ ke

9. _____ pe

10. _____ kpe

11. _____ kpaka

12. _____ pakpa

13. _____ kapa

14. _____ kpapa

15. _____ kpiki

16. _____ pike

17. _____ kpolo

18. _____ kulu

19. _____ pulu

20. _____ kpekpe

12. gb vrs g vrs b vrs kp

1. _____ ba
2. _____ ga
3. _____ gba
4. _____ gba
5. _____ gbe
6. _____ be
7. _____ be
8. _____ ge
9. _____ gu
10. _____ bu

11. _____ gbu
12. _____ bulu
13. _____ gulu
14. _____ gbulu
15. _____ saba
16. _____ sagba
17. _____ saga
18. _____ taba
19. _____ tokpo
20. _____ tokpo

13. gb vrs b vrs b vrs g vrs kp

1. _____ ga
2. _____ gba
3. _____ ba
4. _____ gba
5. _____ ba
6. _____ ba
7. _____ be
8. _____ be
9. _____ be
10. _____ be

11. _____ bo
12. _____ gbo
13. _____ kpoli
14. _____ boli
15. _____ buli
16. _____ gbuli
17. _____ buli
18. _____ kpuli
19. _____ puli
20. _____ baba

16. p vrs β vrs v vrs f

1. _____ pa
2. _____ fa
3. _____ va
4. _____ fa
5. _____ va
6. _____ βa
7. _____ fa
8. _____ va
9. _____ va
10. _____ βa

11. _____ βi
12. _____ vi
13. _____ vili
14. _____ βili
15. _____ fili
16. _____ βulu
17. _____ vulu
18. _____ folo
19. _____ βolo
20. _____ volo

17. š vrs ž vrs č vrs j

1. _____ sa
2. _____ ča
3. _____ sa
4. _____ či
5. _____ ji
6. _____ je
7. _____ že
8. _____ še
9. _____ se
10. _____ še

11. _____ zowo
12. _____ žowo
13. _____ sii
14. _____ šii
15. _____ čii
16. _____ kpaza
17. _____ masa
18. _____ tiča
19. _____ baži
20. _____ žošo

18. y vrs g

1. _____ ga
2. _____ ga
3. _____ ya
4. _____ ya
5. _____ yi
6. _____ yu
7. _____ gu
8. _____ yu
9. _____ ye
10. _____ yo

11. _____ saya
12. _____ gaya
13. _____ yili
14. _____ gili
15. _____ yale
16. _____ yale
17. _____ paya
18. _____ paga
19. _____ payo
20. _____ pago

Suprasegmental Drills19. Long vrs Short Vowels

1. _____ babaa
2. _____ baaba
3. _____ sasasaa
4. _____ saasasa
5. _____ sasaasaa
6. _____ soola
7. _____ teveea
8. _____ masagii
9. _____ fiibee
10. _____ saago

11. _____ tilaa
12. _____ tiilaa
13. _____ tasaata
14. _____ kpaasagii
15. _____ mukulu
16. _____ maaneeve
17. _____ niinei
18. _____ bovelaale
19. _____ kooligii
20. _____ pago

20. Nasalized vrs Oral Vowels

1. _____ ba
2. _____ bā
3. _____ babā
4. _____ bāba
5. _____ lamāā
6. _____ lamaa
7. _____ lāmaa
8. _____ lamaa
9. _____ tɔlɪlɪ
10. _____ tutita

11. _____ kālā
12. _____ kala
13. _____ poō
14. _____ pēēsoe
15. _____ mādigo
16. _____ sōōtɪ
17. _____ wīīgii
18. _____ pɔkɔpa
19. _____ pivugii
20. _____ mūlūba

21. High Tone vrs. Low Tone

1. _____ bábá
2. _____ bábà
3. _____ bàbá
4. _____ bàbà
5. _____ bábà
6. _____ tɪtɪ
7. _____ tɪtɪ
8. _____ kúlú
9. _____ kúlù
10. _____ kúlú

11. _____ tátàtá
12. _____ tátátà
13. _____ tàtátá
14. _____ tàtátà
15. _____ tàtátà
16. _____ kákátá
17. _____ tákákà
18. _____ màmámá
19. _____ màmámà
20. _____ kúlúkú

22. High Tone, Low Tone and Downstep

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. _____ | bá bá | 11. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 2. _____ | bà bà | 12. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 3. _____ | bà bà | 13. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 4. _____ | bà bà bà | 14. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 5. _____ | bà bà bà | 15. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 6. _____ | kò kò kò | 16. _____ | kà kà tà |
| 7. _____ | kò kò kò | 17. _____ | tà kà tà |
| 8. _____ | kú lù lù | 18. _____ | mà là là |
| 9. _____ | fú lù fù | 19. _____ | gà lì gà |
| 10. _____ | pù lì gì | 20. _____ | pù lù lù |

23. High, Low, Rising, Falling

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. _____ | bà bà | 11. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 2. _____ | bà bà | 12. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 3. _____ | bà bà | 13. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 4. _____ | bà bà | 14. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 5. _____ | bà bà | 15. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 6. _____ | bà bà | 16. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 7. _____ | bà bà | 17. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 8. _____ | bà bà | 18. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 9. _____ | bà bà | 19. _____ | tà tà tà |
| 10. _____ | bà bà | 20. _____ | tà tà tà |