

0. INTRODUCTION

This study on the phonology of the Kɔ̀nsimè language (dialect of Lomié) is the result of research carried out by Keith and Mary Beavon, members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, under Research Authorization No. 102 issued by the National Office for Scientific and Technical Research. The Kɔ̀nsimè language is a member of the 'Maka-Njem Group', identified by Guthrie as 'Njèm'(Zimu, Djem) (A84)¹. It is a Bantu language spoken by approximately 35,000 people. As far as the researchers know, there have been no earlier attempts to describe this language.

There are three main dialects of Kɔ̀nsimè: the dialect of Messamena, the dialect of Lomié, and the dialect of Ngoïla. Word lists in Appendix 3 will assist the reader in appreciating their similarities and differences.

The linguistic work was greatly aided by the linguistic assistant, Mr. Appolinaire Abono, who began helping the researchers on April 1, 1977. It is his subdialect in particular which is herein described. He spent most of his 36 years in the village of Congo, 33 kilometers east of Lomié, within the area populated exclusively by the Nzimé ethnic group.

The lexicon, controlled many times over, comprises an estimated 2500 words. Due to his work as catechist, Mr. Abono learned Bulu, and was thus able to identify and isolate from the lexicon words borrowed by the Nzimé people from their Bulu neighbors to the west.

Location of the Kɔ̀nsimè-speaking ethnic groups

The map below represents one part of the Department of the Upper Nyong, Eastern Province, United Republic of Cameroun. It is located in the south-east part of the country as a whole. The Kɔ̀nsimè-speaking ethnic groups occupy the area which is enclosed by a circle. The Lomié dialect is spoken the area covered by diagonal lines. The scale of the map is 1 : 1,500,000. To the north of the Kɔ̀nsimè speakers are the Maka, to the east are the Kona-bembe, and to the west are the Ewondos and Bulus.

1. M. Guthrie, p. 33.

PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE

Kʒnsimè Language

(Dialect of Lomié)

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