LINGUISTIC DOCUMENTATION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES;
CASES, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN UPPER VOLTA:
THEORETICAL AND APPLIED RESEARCH
ON THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES

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Note: The views expressed are those of the author, and do not commit Unesco.
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INTRODUCTION

In this study we shall survey national linguistic activities in the various public sectors concerned with linguistic research or the application of its findings. Our aims are as follows:

- to list the linguistic resources available in Upper Volta (languages, linguists, completed or current linguistic research projects);
- to determine how these resources are used. For this purpose, we shall undertake a review of the various existing institutions (institutes concerned with research, literacy or education), which should enable us to evaluate current efforts in the field of linguistics, describe the problems encountered and needs expressed, and so give a general picture of Upper Volta's experience in this domain.

Our survey will also provide an opportunity to draw attention to the lack of and need for a clearly-defined and vigorous language policy at national level and to offer suggestions concerning the role that Unesco could play in helping to develop linguistics and promote national languages in Upper Volta.

It is undoubtedly worth while to attempt a project of this kind, if it is well carried out, but the range of the present inquiry was subject to various limits, all of which were due to the lack of information in certain areas.

For example, when compiling the list of available resources, we were handicapped by the lack of precise up-to-date statistics on the number of languages spoken and the number of speakers of each language.

When consulting the various public institutions, we were not always able to gather as much information as was desirable concerning literacy centres and the exact number of people they cater for.

Nevertheless, we hope that these limitations will not diminish the reader's interest in this study.

In accordance with the objectives stated above, we shall begin with an inventory of the linguistic resources available in Upper Volta.

I. LINGUISTIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN UPPER VOLTA

We shall deal with three types:

1. Languages
2. Linguists
3. Linguistic research projects

Languages

The linguistic situation of a country is usually defined, to start with, by the number of languages spoken in that country and the number of speakers of each language. What is the situation in Upper Volta?

Inventory of languages spoken in Upper Volta

In every country, the work of making an inventory of languages is hampered by a major theoretical difficulty which, in Upper Volta's case, is aggravated by a practical problem to which no solution has yet been found.
The theoretical difficulty, acknowledged by the most eminent linguists, is that we lack a rigorous definition of language as opposed to dialect (Greenberg, 1956, p. 69). The problem can be presented more simply as follows: when can we say that two individuals speak the same language, different varieties of the same language, or two different languages? Linguists have tried out every conceivable criterion and particularly that of mutual understanding: two people speak the same language in so far as they understand each other. Unfortunately even this criterion is difficult to apply. It is in fact quite possible to understand someone and for him not to understand you. If I understand what another person says it is because we share the same grammar, the same language; but what are we to conclude if he, for his part, does not understand me?

In Upper Volta, this theoretical difficulty is aggravated by a practical problem, namely the lack of precise and up-to-date statistics on the existing ethnic groups, the languages they speak (no matter how we define the term "language"), the geographical areas in which these "languages" are spoken, the correct names of the languages identified, the number of speakers of each "language", and so forth.

The government recognizes the importance of this information for linguists as well as for the national planning authorities, and a project for producing a sociolinguistic atlas is under way. It is briefly described below on the basis of information supplied by the organization which is responsible for carrying it out, namely the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (CNRTST) (National Centre for Scientific and Technical Research).

The Sociolinguistic Atlas Project and its difficulties

The idea of producing a sociolinguistic atlas for Upper Volta was born in 1967 at the same time as plans were being made to map the country's climate and vegetation. The aims of the project were as follows:

- from the sociolinguistic point of view,

  "to establish the exact distribution of ethnic groups and languages spoken in Upper Volta,

  to study the influence of sociocultural factors (trade patterns and political systems) on linguistic behaviour,

  to determine the factors likely to contribute to the survival of a language or to its neglect in favour of another";

- from the strictly linguistic point of view,

  "to compile, as a priority task, an exhaustive list of all languages spoken in Upper Volta, showing all the dialects identified as the result of a study undertaken in order to establish linguistic boundaries according to the criterion of mutual understanding, linguistic relationships and the various names given to each language".

(S. Platiel, "Projet d'Atlas Sociolinguistique de la Haute-Volta". Mimeographed, CNRTST.)

The project was planned to take four years at a total estimated cost of nearly 41,000,000 CFA francs. It was ratified by the Council of Ministers and the preparatory groundwork was entrusted to S. Platiel, a CNRTST research linguistic who was working at the time on Samo and Bissa. In 1975, she prepared an exploratory survey and a questionnaire to pave the way for the second and most important phase of the project, which was to consist in a large-scale survey covering the whole country.
Unfortunately – mainly for financial reasons – the project has not yet been completed, although it is still believed to be of great importance. A unique opportunity to carry it out – and at less cost – arose in 1975 when a population survey covering the whole country was organized by the Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie (National Institute of Statistics and Population Studies), but in the event the sociolinguistic questionnaire could not be appended to the purely demographic one.

However, firm promises by UNDP and Unesco to provide financial assistance made it possible to reactivate the project early in 1978 and the CNRST linguists were able to do a certain amount of preliminary work for the language survey, which was finally planned for January or February 1979: in particular, they drew up a language questionnaire based on the "questionnaire for the ALCAN inventory of languages (Linguistic Atlas of Cameroon) a sociolinguistic questionnaire to be completed by a sample of at least 60,000 people (i.e. one hundredth of the population) over the age of 12, and a 'village' questionnaire primarily designed to yield information on villages which cannot be adequately covered by the standard survey". In addition to these questionnaires, topological notes were drafted to facilitate the preparation of the language maps (cf. CNRST 1978).

It is very much to be hoped that the proposed sociolinguistic atlas will soon be completed, since it is likely to make an important contribution to our knowledge of languages and ethnic groups in Upper Volta.

While awaiting the completion of this important project and the acquisition of more up-to-date data, we have set out below a few figures taken from the sample population survey which was carried out in the Republic of Upper Volta in 1960–1961 and was published by the Statistics and Population Service existing at that time.

This document lists nine major ethnic groups identified in Upper Volta, which are distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I - Mossi and related groups</td>
<td>2,069,203</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II - Bissa</td>
<td>203,659</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III - Gurma</td>
<td>195,325</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV - Bobo</td>
<td>289,110</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V - Various Malinke groups</td>
<td>297,522</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI - Gurwai</td>
<td>227,846</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII - Benufo</td>
<td>237,184</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII - Lobi, Dagari etc.</td>
<td>301,589</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX - Fulani</td>
<td>447,793</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>42,798</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,317,770</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data are patently inadequate: not only have the population figures changed over the last 18 years – the total resident population of Upper Volta, according to the partial and provisional returns of the 1975 population survey, now numbers about 5,600,000, whereas it was stated to be 4,300,000 in the 1960–1961 survey – but also the list of languages is incomplete, for more languages are spoken in Upper Volta than those accounted for above. Moreover, it is not possible to equate the number of ethnic groups (even if they were all identified) with the number of languages spoken in the country, nor to compare the number of people in each ethnic group with the number of speakers of each language.
Geographical distribution

In the absence of a strictly linguistic atlas for Upper Volta, the ethnographic map reproduced here will give an idea of the geographical distribution of the country’s languages. (4)

(See Skinner: The Mossi of the Upper Volta, in Delplanque, 1976.)

Relationships between languages

In order to work out a sound language policy which has a good chance of succeeding it is necessary, of course, to know what relationships exist between languages. Our discussion of inter-language relationships will cover:

- the use made of national languages by the population;
- typological and genetic relationships;
- social and cultural relations between the speakers of the various languages.

Utilization of African languages in Upper Volta

The status accorded by the government to local languages, in relation to foreign languages, for example, will be examined in the second part of this paper. In this section we shall consider to what extent the country’s various languages are used, for the question of the linguistic complexity of developing countries has often been raised with reference to difficulties (anticipated or actually experienced) concerning the choice of a national language of instruction or of communication as a means of unifying the country.

In Upper Volta, linguistic complexity seems to us to be a less important source of difficulty than it is in other African countries, such as Cameroon, which contains, according to Alexandre (1978, p. 121), about 100 highly differentiated languages or dialects. In Upper Volta, the various languages spoken on the national territory include languages which are dominant in wide regions or exhibit a high degree of typological and/or genetic homogeneity.

The reference to regional predominance is intended to call attention to the existence of languages which carry considerable demographic weight as they are spoken by people inhabiting a clearly-defined geographical area or which are used as lingua francas. The former category would include Moore, spoken by nearly half the country’s population, and Fulfulde, the language of the North.

Dyula/Bambara provides an excellent example of a lingua franca, even though it is spoken mainly in the West of the country. (5) But we still need more precise statistical data, such as the projected Sociolinguistic Atlas is intended to provide, before we can establish with any certainty the demographic weight represented by the speakers of each language and the extent to which each one is used as a contact language. The selection of one or more national languages (for use in education or administration) could then be based on more realistic criteria.

We are in debt to Greenberg (1970, p. 8) for his rigorous exposition of the great typological and/or genetic homogeneity of Upper Volta’s languages. (6) His book shows that all Voltaic languages are members of the large family of Niger-Congo languages can can be divided into three sub-families: Gur (Moore, Gurunsi, Kasena, Gurma, etc.), Mande (Dyula/Bambara, Bobo, Saho, etc.) and West Atlantic (especially Fulfulde).
Clearly, even if this genetic relationship were established for all Upper Volta’s languages, its importance for the development of a national language policy would still be marginal, since typological relationships seem to us to be more practical use. For example, it is easier to harmonize alphabets and the rules governing orthographic transcription for languages with phonological similarities. Research is still needed to bring out normal similarities between the various languages spoken so that they may be taken into account when planning a language policy.

But what is even more important than the existence of dominant languages or languages with close typological and/or genetic relationships is the psycho-sociopolitical interaction between individuals in the ethnic groups speaking the languages which have been identified. Will the dominant language or lingua franca selected as the national medium of instruction in a given region or as an official national language be accepted by all parents of schoolchildren in the region concerned or by all citizens throughout the country? What factors determine whether a particular language is accepted or rejected in a particular region and what factors contribute to the survival of a language or to its neglect in favour of another? No existing document helps us to answer these questions, which are crucial to a national language policy. Here again the proposed Sociolinguistic Atlas to be prepared by the CNRST may provide some of the information we need.

Resources as regards linguists

Linguistics is not yet a widely known science but its importance has been growing steadily in developing countries. In Upper Volta, the first efforts to carry out fundamental research on the national languages and to work out transcription systems were made by missionaries or foreign linguists. We should mention in particular Father Alexander, Father Prost, the Reverend J.F. Hall, Father Bouvinis, M. Houls, G. Manessy, S. Platiel, M. Dieu, T. Peterson and C. Canu.

It is only very recently that Upper Volta nationals have received a training in linguistics enabling them to join in the research work of missionaries and foreign linguists. We have compiled a list of 18 linguists, including 17 Upper Volta nationals, who are working in the public institutions which we were able to consult. Particulars concerning their training, assignment and main interests and/or fields of specialization are set out in the following table.

The reader will find a fuller account of the training of linguists in the paragraphs concerning the University of Ouagadougou which appear in the second part of this paper.

The increasing number of national linguists may be taken as a sign of growing awareness of the place of linguistics in the nation’s development. We shall deal later with the importance of ensuring that the training provided for linguists meets the real needs of the country.

The table shows that the persons listed are primarily interested in the national languages of Upper Volta. We shall now take a closer look at the research projects dealing with these languages which have been completed or are currently in progress.

Linguistic research on the languages of Upper Volta

As a further illustration of the linguistic situation in Upper Volta, it seems worthwhile to give an account of the linguistic research work which has been undertaken on the national languages. It is clearly necessary to acquire a certain amount of objective information about a national language before it can be used in
<p>| Name and first name        | First degree                                      | Master's Degree/M.A. | Doctorate     | Assignment/Address              | Field of specialization/main interest                                                                 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------=======================================|
| COULIBALY Bakary          |                                                  |                      | 3e Cycle      | Director ESLSH                  | General and African linguistics (Bwamu, Dyula) Oral traditions                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               | Univ. of Ouagadougou            |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               | B.P. 7021                       |                                                                                                       |
| BUKUNGU Jean-Baptiste     |                                                  |                      |               | Joint Upper Volta-Unesco Project| General and African Linguistics (Moore) Adult Literacy                                                 |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               | B.P. 111                        |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               | Univ. of Ouagadougou            |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               | B.P. 7021                       |                                                                                                       |
| DAO Bernadette            | Lettres Modernes                                 | M.A. General         |               | Department of Linguistics, IHE, | General and African Linguistics (Bobo, Dyula) Teaching of national languages                         |
|                           | Univ. of Dakar 1975                              | Linguistics, 1977    |               | Ouagadougou                     |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      |               |                                |                                                                                                       |
| DELPLANQUE Alain          |                                                  |                      | 3e Cycle       | Department of Linguistics, Univ. | General and African Linguistics (Gur, Dagari)                                                        |
|                           |                                                  |                      | General        | of Ouagadougou                   |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  |                      | Linguistics, 1976| B.P. 7021                       |                                                                                                       |
| DOUMBA Jeanne             |                                                  |                      |               |                                 |                                                                                                       |
| KOURAOOGO Pierre          | C.E. Sup. in English                             | M.A. General         |               | English Department              | General and African Linguistics (Moore) Linguistics applied to teaching of English                   |
|                           | Ouedougou 1974                                   | Linguistics, 1976    |               | IHE, Ouagadougou                |                                                                                                       |
|                           |                                                  | and TEFL             |               | B.P. 7047                       |                                                                                                       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Education/Experience</th>
<th>University/Degree</th>
<th>Section/Institution</th>
<th>Additional Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mëda Banoît</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English Ouagadougou 1974</td>
<td>M.A. General Linguistics 1974</td>
<td>Linguistic Section CNEPAFS, Ouagadougou B.P. 1179</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Dagara) Audio-visual teaching methods, Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidréébéogo Gérard</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English</td>
<td>M.A. General Linguistics 1974</td>
<td>Linguistic Section CNRST, B.P. 7047 Ouagadougou</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Moore) Historical and Comparative Linguistics, Dialectology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanou Assistante (Mrs.)</td>
<td>Univ. of Ouagadougou 1978</td>
<td></td>
<td>D.A.F.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Education/Education and Training</td>
<td>Specialisation</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Language</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANOU Dafrassi(François)</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English</td>
<td>General Linguistics</td>
<td>3e Cycle, General Linguistics, 1977</td>
<td>Depart. of Linguistics Univ. of Ouagadougou B.P. 7021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONE DEHervé</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English</td>
<td>M.A. General Linguistics</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Moore), English, Translation/Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONE DER Joachin</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English</td>
<td>General Linguistics</td>
<td>Depart. of Linguistics Univ. of Ouagadougou B.P. 7021</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Dagari), Historical and Comparative Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORCOE J. Germain</td>
<td>C.E. Sup. in English</td>
<td>3e Cycle, General Linguistics</td>
<td>Depart. of Linguistics Univ. of Ouagadougou B.P. 7021</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Moore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOPA Benoit</td>
<td>General Linguistics</td>
<td>General Linguistics</td>
<td>Univ. of Ouagadougou B.P. 7021</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Gurma) Orthography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOURBE Auguste</td>
<td>English Clermont-Ferrand 1966</td>
<td>M.A. General Linguistics and TEFL, 1975</td>
<td>Depart. of Modern Languages, Univ. of Ouagadougou B.P. 7021</td>
<td>General and African Linguistics (Sissa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
education (as a subject or medium of instruction) or in literacy campaigns. Hence the need for an inventory of completed linguistic research projects on national languages. Unfortunately, although work has started on an inventory of this kind, the results of the inquiry are still very provisional and incomplete, so that an exhaustive list is not yet available. The information provided below has been drawn from an ongoing survey conducted by CNRST, and complementary data have been added when possible.

The document in question (still untitled) begins with a review of general research projects (classification, linguistic geography, comparative studies approached mainly from the diachronic point of view, etc.) in which one or more Upper Volta languages are mentioned. Though we recognize the importance of this research we shall confine ourselves here to stating the number of published (or unpublished) studies dealing with a given language.

The information available covers 27 Upper Volta languages and dialects. Because of uncertainty as to their genetic and typological affinities and the ensuing doubts as to their classification according to these criteria, the languages are arranged in alphabetical order. When the name of a language differs from that of the ethnic group we have given the former. For each language we show:

1. the school-books known to exist: under this heading, the figure in the first column refers to grammar books and the figure in the second column to syllabaries and other books used in literacy or post-literacy training;

2. textbooks, articles and theoretical dissertations on the language's orthography;

3. dictionaries, glossaries, lexicons and articles or books dealing with lexicology;

4. more theoretical works on phonetics, phonology, morphology or syntax;

5. works on stylistics or the oral tradition and, in general, books written from a primarily sociolinguistic or ethnolinguistic angle.

Needless to say, the contents of some works are relevant to more than one of the five headings and this has raised problems of classification. Nevertheless, we believe that the table gives a fairly good idea of the present state of research and indicates in particular what remains to be done for each of these languages and for those not listed.

It should be noted that certain languages, especially Bambara/Dyula and Fulfulde, are spoken in other countries and are being investigated by the specialists of those countries. It has not always been possible to include such studies. In more exhaustive bibliographies, such as the "supplementary bibliography" provided in the most recent edition of Westerman and Bryan (1970), as many as four pages are devoted to the language of the Fula (called Fulfulde in our table) and five to the Mande languages. The works mentioned in these lists often cover varieties of languages other than those found in Upper Volta and it has therefore been difficult to include them in the following table.
### TABLE SHOWING THE PRESENT STATE OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH ON THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES OF UPPER VOLTA

*(provisional findings)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>School-books</th>
<th>Orthography</th>
<th>Dictionaries, lexicons, lexicology</th>
<th>Phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax</th>
<th>Stylistics, oral traditions, sociolinguistics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar books</td>
<td>Literacy training books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Bambara/Dyula</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26 (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bissa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ewe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bozo</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17 (4)</td>
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<td>6. Dagari</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 (5)</td>
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<td>7. Dogon</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Dogonie</td>
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<td>9. Fulafulde</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>19 (3)</td>
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<td>10. Gouin</td>
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<td>11. Gurma</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>10 (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Karenko</td>
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<td>13. Karaboro</td>
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<td>15. Ko</td>
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<td>17. Lyele</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Moore</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>79 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Nativo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Nuni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Sembla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Sama</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Senofo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Bisa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Turkwa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Vigye</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Wana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REMARKS

The table reveals that, quite apart from the quality of the studies included, linguists have paid more attention to certain languages than to others: in particular, it is on the most widely-spoken languages that the largest number of documents are to be found.

But the table gives no information on the nature of the research - some very early studies may not be applicable today, for example - nor does it indicate its scope: a single book that studies the meaning and structure of the vocabulary and the syntax of a given language may be more useful for the drafting of textbooks than ten works on folk tales (which, moreover, are often written in French) or on proper names. Research workers should acquaint themselves with the research work that has already been done and gear their own activities to the linguistic needs of the country.

This preliminary survey will have given some idea of the linguistic resources available in Upper Volta. A rationally planned language policy must take these resources and the country's needs into consideration. In the following pages, we shall try to determine how the available linguistic resources have been used so far.

II. UTILIZATION OF LINGUISTIC RESOURCES: LANGUAGE POLICY IN UPPER VOLTA

Does Upper Volta have a language policy?

The phrase "language policy in Upper Volta" implies that such a policy exists; to our knowledge, however, no official document outlining a policy or a short- or long-term plan in regard to languages has been published. The second part of this study will therefore be more concerned with actual practice in the utilization of linguistic resources than with a policy based on planning.

Our inquiry into actual practice will begin with a list of official texts on the utilization of languages in Upper Volta (specific official instructions or statements of governmental intentions in regard to languages). We shall follow this up with a review of the various institutions concerned with literacy, education or research where language and/or linguistic problems probably arise in a more acute form than elsewhere.

Official instructions and governmental intentions in regard to languages in Upper Volta

As no single document exists which goes thoroughly into the problem of languages, we have been obliged to glean references to the languages spoken in Upper Volta from Ministerial Orders or Messages from the Head of State. The following may be noted:

1. Decree No. 289 bis of 13 August 1965 on the reorganization of primary education which stipulates in Article 6 that:

"This instruction (primary education) shall be given in French and possibly in other languages to be fixed by degree".

2. Decree No. 69/012/PRES of 17 January 1969 setting up the Commission Nationale des Langues Voltaiques - CNLV (National Commission on Voltaic Languages) and Decree No. 75/488/PRES/FN of 16 December 1975, which modifies the previous decree. We shall examine the role assigned to this Languages Commission farther on in this paper.
3. A decree modifying the alphabet used for the national languages of Upper Volta.

4. The Constitution of the Third Republic of Upper Volta, Chapter I (of the State and National sovereignty), in which Article 3 stipulates that:

"the official language of 'Upper Volta' shall be French. Measures shall be enacted for promoting national languages and defining their official status".

5. The Dossier Initial on the reform of education. We shall return to this document later, but the point to note here is that one of the innovations advocated by this plan for the reform of education consists in the adoption of three national languages as media of instruction in primary schools.

The Dossier Initial cannot be said to be an official text. However, it emanated from a government department and was prepared at the request of the responsible minister. Therefore, although it does not contain official instructions, it does at least set out governmental intentions in regard to education and hence, by implication, those in regard to the national languages.

6. The President of the Republic's Message to the Nation of 4 August 1978, in the course of which the Head of State declared that the reform of education should become a reality under the Third Republic (see Carrefour Africain, No. 679, dated 4-18 August 1978).


8. Decree No. 78/358/FREE/ENG of 15 September 1978 on the reorganization of the Ministry of National Education and Culture. This Decree sets up, among other bodies, a Direction de l'alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et Sélective - DAFS (Division of Functional and Selective Literacy) to be responsible, inter alia, for "the promotion of functional and selective literacy in the national languages" (Article 10).


From the government's official instructions and declared intentions, it emerges that, in practice:

- a clear distinction is drawn between the official language (the language used for the purposes of administration and justice and, until now, as a medium of instruction in schools, colleges and the university) and the national languages;

- all African languages spoken by resident citizens of Upper Volta are treated as national languages on an equal footing.

On the whole, the official texts tend to be reticent about the role of the national languages, particularly in relation to the official language. However, the importance of national languages in education and literacy training is becoming increasingly apparent and it is clear that the trend towards the widening use of these languages started up about ten years ago and is steadily gathering momentum. The participants in the Seminar on the Introduction of National Languages in Schools noted, as evidence of this trend, that,
"A more profound knowledge of the national languages has been acquired thanks to the work of linguists and national subcommittees;

- Adult literacy training in national languages is provided by public and private organizations;

- Instruction is given exclusively in national languages in the courses run by the Service de Formation de Jeunes Agriculteurs - P.J.A. (Young Farmers' Training Service);

- The national languages are being used more frequently by the mass media (radio and television) and in official speeches;

- Confidence in the value of the national culture is gradually growing, and this is the beginning of authenticity;

- Some teaching materials in national languages have been introduced into primary education (songs in national language are used in primary schools)" (INE 1978, p. 43).

After this general review of the situation, it remains for us to take a closer look at language policy in regard to literacy training, education in national languages, the training of technical staff and the guidelines for linguistic research.

Language policy in regard to literacy

Literacy rates in Upper Volta

The statistics on the level of educational attainment have to be handled with great caution in view of the methods, and especially the criteria, which were employed to obtain them. In the Sample Population Survey already referred to above, the level of educational attainment was measured by the ability to speak and/or write French, but it is not known what standards were applied by the interviewers - how fluent did a person have to be to count as one of those who "speak French", to be included among the "literates" as opposed to the "illiterates"? However, the results of the 1960-1961 survey are given below:

### Knowledge of French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No knowledge of French %</th>
<th>Able to speak French %</th>
<th>Able to read or read and write French %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Upper Volta</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>except for Ouagadougou and Bobo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban areas of secondary importance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Whether we consider only the total number of people who speak French or add to that figure the number of people who read or read and write it, the number of "literates" is very small.

The authors of the report on the survey point out that "in addition, a number of Muslims know Arabic or are able to write a vernacular language in Arabic script, and people having lived in Ghana have a more or less thorough command of English (p. 119). No figures relating to these members of the population are shown in the above table, but it is unlikely that their inclusion would have greatly improved the average rate for educational attainment.

The provisional returns of the 1975 population survey also give an idea of literacy rates (established, this time, on a nation-wide basis). The administrative officials of the Population Studies Division of the National Institute of Statistics and Population Studies kindly placed at our disposal Tables 27, 28 and 29 which classify the "resident population by literacy and age". We shall merely reproduce the aggregate figures as follows:

### Literacy Rates (resident population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population of Upper Volta</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Literates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Illiterates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Undetermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>362,610</td>
<td>111,986</td>
<td>30.88</td>
<td>249,671</td>
<td>68.85</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
<td>149,001</td>
<td>26,779</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>122,054</td>
<td>81.91</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5,126,592</td>
<td>280,098</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>4,839,740</td>
<td>94.40</td>
<td>6,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total resident population</td>
<td>5,638,203</td>
<td>418,863</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>5,211,465</td>
<td>92.43</td>
<td>7,875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Tables 27, 28 and 29, from which these figures are drawn, did not give the percentages.

The same problems concerning the interviewers' standards and criteria arise as in the case of the 1960-1961 Survey. Furthermore, we were unable to ascertain whether the figures given for "literates" in these tables included individuals who were newly literate in the national languages. Nor could we establish how the letter compared in number with those able to read or read and write French only.

At all events, the national literacy rate is still very low - about 7.5 percent - although there is an appreciable difference between the situation in 1975 and the one prevailing in 1960-1961.

In the face of these facts, it was realized that the literacy problem was a matter of the highest importance. Accordingly, Upper Volta has, on the one hand, participated fully in symposia, conferences and other meetings on the subject of literacy, most of which have been organized by Unesco, and, on the other, set up public institutions to be responsible, in some cases exclusively, for promoting literacy among the young and especially among adults. We shall confine ourselves here to providing information on literacy activities.
Organizations for the promotion of literacy

In order to gauge the efforts being made to promote literacy, we asked each major institution to supply the following information:

- date of foundation,
- objectives or responsibilities,
- number of literacy centres operated, number of people they cater for and the language or languages of instruction used in literacy training courses,
- the technical staff available to the institution (particularly the number of linguists),
- and, where possible,
- the administrative budget, and especially the contribution of the Upper Volta Government.

We were able to obtain a certain amount of information on the Division of Functional and Selective Literacy, the Young Farmers' Training Service and the Project on Equality of Educational Opportunity for Girls and Women.

The Direction de l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et Sélective - DAPS

The DAPS came into being when the Office National d'Education Permanente et d'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et Sélective - ONEPAFS (National Office for Life-long Education and Functional and Selective Literacy) was transformed. The latter had been set up by Decree No. 74/267/PRES/EN of 6 August 1974. Its aims and structure were defined by Decree No. 76/136/PRES/ENG of 26 April 1976, Article 4 of which stated that the task of the ONEPAFS was:

- to provide, in so far as necessary, functional and selective literacy courses for Upper Volta nationals;

- to provide a further training and permanent information service for citizens who have achieved literacy but wish to retain, improve and adapt their knowledge to the demands of a constantly changing world;

- to foster general awareness of a citizen's rights and duties and to co-ordinate and stimulate activities in this field;

- to help citizens to develop an open attitude to the rest of the world so that they may perform their proper role, which is to work for true universal peace based on justice".

The Decree does not specify which language should be used in literacy training. But more explicit instructions on this point may be found in the more recent Decree, No. 78/358/PRES/ENG of 15 September 1978, which dealt, inter alia, with the steps to be taken to convert the ONEPAFS into the DAPS. Article 10 of this Decree defines the responsibilities of the DAPS as follows:

- "to promote functional and selective literacy in the national languages,
- to stimulate and co-ordinate activities in this field,
- to train instructors for functional and selective literacy courses".

In practice, the DAPS (ex-ONEPAFS) uses 6 national languages in its centres: Moore, Dyula, Kasim, Soso, Gurma and Dagari. A syllabary for Fulfulde is in course of preparation.

The DAPS supplies literacy materials to about 500 centres which come under the direct responsibility of the service implementing the project entitled Aménagement des Vallées des Volta - AVV (Volta Valley Development), the Organisations Régionales de Développement - ORD (Regional Development Agencies) or Catholic missions. Between 7,000 and 7,500 adults are said to be receiving instruction in these centres. More precise figures will be given in the forthcoming report on the activities of the ex-ONEPAFS.
The DAFS employs two linguists, one with an M.A. degree and the D.E.A. (Diploma of Advanced Studies) and the other with a first degree in linguistics. A third member of the staff is due to sit for his first degree in linguistics this year.

In 1978, the government contributed 10 million CFA francs towards the operating costs of the ONZAFS (although the latter had submitted a request for 30 million CFA francs). Since the DAFS has hardly begun to operate as such, no information regarding its budget is available as yet.

The Joint Upper Volta-UNESCO Project: Equality of Educational Opportunity for Girls and Women (abbreviated here to "Equal Opportunity Project for Women")

The following account of the activities undertaken in implementation of this project was given in the report presented by A. Ghassemi:

"This experimental project started in 1967 and was planned to last 10 years.

The relevant activities have been undertaken in three zones, each of which covers an area of 20-30 square kilometres, in the regions of KOUNGUSSI, LANFORA and PO.

The purpose of the project is to improve living conditions in rural areas through the participation of women in the socio-economic development of the country.

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

(a) to provide education and functional literacy training for adult women;
(b) to improve courses of technical education for girls;
(c) to give practical instruction in hygiene, without which the situation of women in rural areas cannot be improved;
(d) to encourage women to participate more actively in the conservation of harvested crops, the marketing of produce and the management of a family savings plan" (Ghassemi 1971-1973, Annex 13, p. 4).

The literacy programme proper started in 1970. It should be noted that, in addition to the units established in the three places mentioned in the report, centres have recently been opened in Ouagaoudougou and others are planned for Dédougou, Bobo and Dori. We have not yet been able to ascertain the exact number of centres and how many women they cater for.

As regards the language used in literacy training, Ghassemi's report mentions plans for "introducing women to the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, initially in the local language and later in French (p. 3). The languages currently employed are Moore, Dyula and Kasin.

There is a shortage of technical staff (linguists) for literacy training courses. Mr. Ghassemi's report point out that "there are not enough qualified people doing field-work in pursuance of the tasks of writing, illustrating, editing and preparing all the materials needed in view of the characteristics of the languages used in literacy training" (p. 20). At present the project employs one linguist on contract who is assisted by a teacher trained in linguistics.
Mr. Chassemi's report does not mention the amount contributed by the Upper Volta Government to the budget for the project. The project was recently reorganized under the new title of "Service d'Éducation et Participation de la Femme au Développement" (Promotion of the Education of Women and their Participation in Development) and the responsible department was attached for administrative purposes to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Condition of Women, but it continues to pursue the same objectives as before. Under the new arrangements, which came into force in January 1973, the project will benefit from a UNDP contribution of US $500,000 and Upper Volta will provide 163,481,590 CFA francs.

The Service de Formation des Jeunes Agriculteurs (FJA)

The FJA was set up mainly because of the desire to compensate for the failure of the first Rural Education schools established in mid-1961 under the "Plan Cristol Medar". Since the country's literacy rate was too low, this plan sought to raise the school enrolment ratio by means of an inexpensive and easily applied system and thus discourage people living in rural areas from migrating to the towns. It was also thought that rural development could be promoted through the education of the young.

Despite the large number of centres (more than 700 were operating throughout the country) and although they catered for many young people (30,000-35,000), this initial attempt failed for several reasons: poor equipment, recruitment of pupils at an unduly early age (12 years old), lack of further training facilities for young people, problems of communication between young people trained in French and the villagers, who spoke only the local languages, very badly paid instructors, and so forth.

As a result of evaluation studies conducted by Unesco, the structure and methods of the training scheme had to be changed. This led to the creation of the FJA under the authority of the Ministry of Rural Development by Decree No. 74/273/PRES/PR-DV-E-T of 9 August 1971.

One of the most important aspects of the new methods of training was the decision to carry out all FJA education in national languages. In the Rural Education schools, training had been provided exclusively in French, and this had inevitably given rise to problems. In the new scheme, literacy courses in particular are conducted in the dominant regional language, which is selected by the ORD according to the location of the centre and the local level of bilingualism.

But one of the serious handicaps of the FJA literacy programme consists in the lack of suitably trained full-time linguists.

At first, a linguist was appointed, but now that his contract has expired the teaching unit is obliged to rely on the unpaid services of a student who is preparing for his first degree in linguistics. This is clearly a very serious situation, especially in view of the fact that the FJA runs 735 centres (including 85 for girls) with 2,581 students (including 1,636 girls).

The above information on the language policy in regard to literacy training shows that, very soon after the country's accession to independence, the government became aware of the country's dangerously low rate of literacy. But in the first efforts to promote literacy (courses for adults, Rural Education), the training was provided exclusively in French, the official language, and it is only in the last ten years that more attention has been paid to the national languages.

Furthermore, the language policy applies, as it were, a double standard, for the medium of instruction varies according to the people to be taught. French, the official language, is used in European-type formal education and the national languages are used for mass literacy programmes.
However, a major change is in prospect now that the plan for the reform of education has been published. This will be examined in greater detail in the following section which deals with language policy in regard to formal education.

Language policy in regard to education in national languages

The official body in charge of primary and secondary formal education is the National Institute of Education (INE). Two facts appear to signal the advent of an important change in the language policy pursued in formal education: the establishment of a department of linguistics at the INE and the afore-mentioned plan for the reform of education.

The department of linguistics at the INE

In Upper Volta, French has been and still is the sole medium of formal education (see Article 10 of Decree No. 269 bis of 13 August 1965 referred to above). It is therefore hardly surprising that for a long time it was foreign linguists working in or in conjunction with the department of French who took the lead in applying linguistics to education. Such studies on local languages as were undertaken concentrated mainly on comparative analyses with a view to identifying the ways in which these languages might interfere with French in the speech of pupils.

However, the Institute's need for full-time linguists became apparent and a "linguistics unit" was set up in 1977 with two Upper Volta linguists in charge of its activities (see the general list of specialists in African languages working in Upper Volta).

These two people devote much of their time to research in linguistics, to the linguistic training of students intending to become guidance counsellors, and to the preparation, in co-operation with the members of other departments, of a Dossier Final on the reform of education in Upper Volta.

The Plan for the Reform of Education and the place of national languages

The idea of reforming the entire system of education in Upper Volta was advanced for the first time in a letter addressed by the Minister of National Education and Culture to the educational planning division on 21 September 1972.

In response to this letter, the planning division carried out an inquiry and this resulted in draft proposals for reform which are set out in a booklet entitled Réforme de l'Education - Dossier Initial.

According to the Dossier Initial, the main objectives of the reform are as follows:

(a) "To democratize knowledge by providing educational opportunities for all through the promotion of enrolment in schools and literacy training courses.

(b) To gear education to development (for example, by adapting the training of high-level supervisory staff and middle-grade personnel to the needs of the modern sector of the economy).

(c) To foster the development of an authentic culture through the widespread introduction of Moore, Dyula and Fula into the framework of a policy for regionalizing the development of education" (p. 81).

This plan to introduce national languages into formal education raises several questions:
- What are the attitudes of ordinary people to the use of national languages in education in Upper Volta?

- Were the three languages mentioned in the Dossier chosen in an arbitrary manner or as part of the preparation of a national plan for languages?

- What is the present position as regards the proposed reform? Will it be possible to implement the plan one day?

As regards the question of attitudes, it must be admitted that the people of Upper Volta have much the same views on this matter as those of other African countries (see, for example, the study on Senegal carried out by Calvet in 1967). The Dossier Initial reveals that "a comfortable majority is in favour .... Only the adults are less inclined to support this proposal: Just over half (58 per cent) want their children to learn to read and write their mother tongue; their reluctance is even more evident when they are interviewed, for then it becomes quite clear that a knowledge of French is regarded as a passport to the towns and as a useful qualification for securing a well-paid job" (p. 62).

The Dossier then goes on to stress the need for "a general consciousness-raising campaign aimed at the upgrading of the national languages" (ibid). We would add that a similar campaign is also needed in support of efforts to promote literacy training.

Why these three languages - Moore, Dyula and Fulfulde? In the Dossier Initial itself we found no arguments to justify the choice of any one of these languages. Some people suggested that they had been selected because they were the most representative languages of the Gur, Wolof and Western Atlantic groups respectively. Others emphasized the large number of speakers of these languages, which qualifies them to serve as languages of regional intercommunication (linguistique). The head of the Direction des Etudes et de l'Elaboration des Programmes - DEEP - (Division of Studies and Curriculum Development) at INE has now supplied the following information on the criteria which determined the choice of the three languages mentioned above.

As this is a delicate issue on which no clear language policy has been formulated, the criteria set out below were applied in decreasing order of importance:

(a) Written Status. The language selected should have been the subject of sufficiently thorough linguistic studies to possess an orthography. The existence of written documents on the language was also an advantage. When this criterion was applied, Moore and Dyula appeared to be the best placed because their systems of orthography had been virtually established even before the competent subcommittees had been set up.

(b) Geographical area covered. The language selected should be spoken throughout the widest possible geographical area. Owing to the size of the plateau which is the Mossi homeland, Moore seemed to cover the largest geographical area in Upper Volta. Dyula and Fulfulde had an advantage over Moore in that they are spoken not only in Upper Volta but also in neighbouring countries (Mali and Ivory Coast in the case of Dyula/Bambara, and the region lying between Senegal and Chad in the case of Fulfulde). For this reason, these languages were naturally suited to serve as languages of regional and inter-African communication.

(c) Number of speakers. When two languages satisfied the first two criteria, the one spoken by the largest number of people was selected.
It should be noted that the policy regarding choice of languages is not the same when the texts refer to literacy training and when they refer to languages of instruction. Where literacy training is concerned there is, in principle, no restriction: the only conditions for introducing or encouraging literacy courses in a given language are that it should be the subject of a CNLV subcommittee and should possess an orthography. On the other hand, much more stringent criteria are applied when it is a case of choosing a language of instruction in formal education. Yet the door is left open for languages other than Moore, Dyula and Fulfulde to be adopted at some time in the future, for if a language that is dominant in a fairly large region were to acquire a recognized written status, these criteria would enable it to become the medium of instruction for the area in question.

Development of the Plan for the Reform of Education: from the Dossier Initial stage to the Dossier Final stage

The Dossier Initial has been widely examined and discussed since it was first produced. The linguistics unit is now working with other sections of the DEEP on a "Dossier Final" that will define how the plan is to be implemented. It can be said to be making good progress: at a recent meeting of the Council of Ministers, the government authorized the commencement of work on the experimental stage. There are therefore good grounds for optimism.

It should be stressed, however, that an enormous amount of work remains to be done before formal education can be dispensed in national languages. Although the Moore, Dyula and Fulfulde subcommittees have proposed fairly satisfactory spelling systems for these languages, the fact remains that a language which has only acquired an orthography is not necessarily ready to serve as a medium of instruction, even at the elementary level of education represented by the "basic cycle". Before this stage could be reached, the following materials would still have to be prepared:

- Grammar books for teaching the structures of the languages employed;
- General dictionaries;
- Dictionaries of technical terms containing either existing indigenous words or newly-invented words to express the new concepts to be taught in lessons on history, geography, arithmetic, etc. The problem of adapting national languages to the needs of their speakers is a particularly important one;
- Textbooks for all the subjects to be taught.

In the absence of these tools, even if the Plan for the Reform of Education were ratified tomorrow we would not be any nearer the goal of using national languages as media of education. Indeed, to the best of our knowledge, none of the three languages proposed for use in formal education possesses all the above-mentioned tools. (9)

Furthermore, a governmental decision to go ahead with the Plan should at the same time release the funds needed in order to prepare these basic materials and build up a qualified staff.

Such measures should be backed up by training and retraining courses for primary school teachers and by consciousness-raising campaigns aimed at both the "masses" and the "intellectual elite". It goes without saying that we shall need the technical and financial assistance of international organizations such as Unesco, UNDP, AGECOOP, and even of more prosperous friendly States.
The institutions concerned with literacy and those responsible for formal education may be said to be the users of what linguistic research produces. In order to give a more complete picture of the linguistic situation, we must consider the effort made in the field of research, with special reference to the training of linguists and the ways in which their work is being directed towards activities meeting the needs of the country.

Language policy in regard to the training of technical staff and the direction of research

Training of technical staff

It is only very recently that Upper Volta nationals have become interested in linguistics. The list of specialists in African languages working in Upper Volta reveals that 17 of the 18 persons included obtained their first degree, M.A. or Ph.D. in linguistics between 1974 and 1978. Indeed, most of them took their first degree in another subject (especially English) and only turned to linguistics at CI or M.A. level.

Their studies can only be said to reflect an official policy in the sense that the Upper Volta Government allowed them to study linguistics, for no specific requirements were formulated as to fields of specialization.

It should be added that most of them studied linguistics abroad (especially in France and America), and this may have made it even more difficult for the government to lay down guidelines for their studies: a great many people (including senior officials) are not only quite ignorant of what linguistics involves but also very ill-informed on the actual courses provided by foreign universities (especially those in America).

In April 1974, the Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur (Centre of Higher Education) at Ouagadougou became a University (see Ordonnance No. 74/031/PRES/EN of 19 April 1974). Since then the Ecole Supérieure des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (School of Arts and Humanities) has included a Department of Linguistics in addition to the Departments of Modern Literature, Modern Languages, Geography, History and Archaeology. The Department of Linguistics has a teaching staff of nine, including eight specialists in African languages (see the general list of specialists in African Languages).\[10\]

By 1978, the number of students enrolled in the Department had risen to 71, 15 of whom were in the final year of the first degree course (these figures include scholarship-holders). The University's first students of Linguistics graduated in 1976. All of them have since obtained their Master's degree in France and are preparing the DEA or the Doctorat du Troisième Cycle.

The University's course in linguistics proper comprises a first-year course on phonetics and phonology, a second-year course on general linguistics (morphology and syntax) and two compulsory courses on Moore and Dyula.\[11\] The third year is devoted to courses on lexicology and semantics, transformational grammar, instrumental phonetics and African linguistics (phonology, morphology and syntax).

This curriculum reflects a strong desire to introduce students to the structure of African languages in general and of Upper Volta languages in particular. It has a theoretical slant, and the only more practical work seems to be done in courses on "the transcription of Upper Volta languages: Moore, Dyula", which are options for students of the Department of Linguistics. A plan to teach Moore and Dyula as modern common languages was rejected by the Assembly of the University. There are plans for third-year courses (at CI level) on ethnolinguistics or sociolinguistics but the shortage of teachers has so far made it impossible to organize them.
However, the fact that no M.A. course is available in Upper Volta and
the problem of equivalence between our degrees and foreign degrees (particularly
the French ones) greatly reduce curriculum flexibility, inasmuch as the courses
provided have to be so designed that students can pursue their studies abroad
and are sure of being readily accepted in foreign institutions.

Direction of research

We have thought it worth while to include a description of the research
activities of each of the specialists in Voltaic or African languages working in
the country's public institutions. This will give the identity of the few special-
ists in question but will also provide information primarily intended to give a
clearer picture of the direction of their research. A list of the relevant
studies is given in the Annex.

The various people engaged in linguistic research are working in the follow-
ing institutions:

- the Department of Linguistics of the University of Ouagadougou;
- the linguistics unit of the INE;
- the linguistic section of the National Centre for Scientific and
  Technical Research (CNRST);
- the National Commission on Voltaic Languages (CNLV).

The research activities of teacher-researchers in the University's Depart-
ment of Linguistics can be said to exhibit two distinctive features: their
individual character and a tendency to concentrate on theoretical or descriptive
studies.

We have referred to their individual character in order to draw attention
to the absence of joint research projects (such as those to be found at the
CNRST or INE). Each individual is left to choose his own theme of research.
Accordingly, as many studies have been completed or are in progress as there are
research workers with their particular inclinations and/or fields of competence.

The tendency to concentrate on theoretical or descriptive studies is
another point which emerges from the list of individual publications (see Annex).

The linguists of the CNRST and INE have been assigned specific tasks at
the CNRST, to prepare the Sociolinguistic atlas, and at the INE, to prepare the
Dossier Final on the reform of education (besides training students to become
guidance counsellors).

It is also very clear that research is being directed towards activities
meeting national needs in the CNLV language "subcommittees".

The CNLV is probably less well known to the general public than the CNRST
or the University but, in setting it up, the Government took an unprecedented
decision to gear the administrative machinery to the task of promoting the
national languages.

The CNLV was established by Presidential Decree No. 69/012/PRES of
17 January 1969, later modified by Decree No. 75/438/PRES/EN of 16 December 1975,
and was made responsible for:

(a) enhancing the status of Voltaic languages;
(b) initiating, promoting and co-ordinating studies on Voltaic languages;
(c) giving decisions on transcription systems.
The Commission was placed under the authority of the Minister of National Education and Culture, who acts as Chairman at its meetings, and technical studies to do with linguistic research or the development of systems of orthography are carried out by the linguists attached to the various institutions examined here who are also members of the Commission. This work is done mainly at the level of the "subcommittees" set up for each national language in respect of which such studies are requested, and 13 subcommittees have already been established to deal with 13 national languages.

The chief concern of these subcommittees has been to tackle problems relating to literacy and post-literacy work. One of the very first tasks of every newly-established subcommittee is to make proposals for an alphabet and a system of orthography that will facilitate efforts to start a literacy campaign in the language in question. The programmes of activities which the various subcommittees submit every year to the General Assembly of the CNLV usually include the following:

- working out a system of orthography;
- starting adult literacy courses;
- producing post-literacy reading materials (usually a newspaper);
- publishing a glossary of technical terms, a grammar book and so forth.

In order to provide guidance for the work on systems of orthography and the preparation of literacy and post-literacy textbooks, an Extraordinary General Assembly of 10 June 1976 decided to set up a Technical Committee whose role is "to watch over the quality of publications in the national languages". This committee is responsible in particular, for reading the proofs of all kinds of technical documents to be used by the subcommittees or other bodies concerned with literacy, making such corrections as are required to apply the spelling rules established for each language and ensure the use of the national alphabet set out in a draft decree that has been submitted for signature by the President of the Republic.

The various subcommittees are making very uneven progress: some, such as those for Moore and Dyula, have been in existence for several years (in the case of Moore since 23 January 1970, and in the case of Dyula since 15 July 1971) and bring together almost all the country's linguists. Consequently the systems of orthography which they are working out will soon be finalized and they publish many documents disseminating information on their findings. Other subcommittees have only recently come into being and/or do not include a qualified linguist, so that they are proceeding more tentatively. All are still handicapped by the shortage of linguists, since the few specialists available do their work for the subcommittees on an unpaid basis besides performing their regular duties as teachers and/or research workers. We should add that the financial resources of the CNLV are extremely limited: its budget estimates, on which the subcommittees are very dependent for funds, came to about 21,000,000 CFA francs for 1978. The National Budget was able to provide 1/21 of this sum. It was the very first time that the government could give proof in financial terms of its "steadily growing interest in the CNLV". It is to be hoped, as the Minister of National Education said on opening the last CNLV General Assembly, that "this example ... will not fail to evoke a favourable response among all our friends abroad who have understood that our languages are and will always be the expression of our very being" (ibid.).
III. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From this brief survey of the various sectors in which linguistic activities are being conducted we may conclude that for a long time linguistic research has been primarily directed towards the promotion of adult literacy. Since the 1960s the Republic of Upper Volta has been participating in symposia and seminars organized by Unesco on this theme. Literacy work which was started by missionaries and unpaid volunteers, has gradually become a matter for governmental action. The founding of the CNLV and its sub-committees, the establishment of an office specifically charged with the task of co-ordinating efforts to promote literacy, and the enthusiastic part played in the drive for literacy by the ORDs and other services such as those of the PFA and the Equal Opportunity Project for Women - all these facts afford evidence of a new awareness, at a very high level, of the importance of literacy for economic and social development.

The plan to introduce national languages into formal education has come to the fore much more recently yet it stands to reason that the promotion of adult literacy in national languages should go hand in hand with their introduction into formal education: at this juncture, French is so important as the language of social advancement that to provide one type of education exclusively in French for a few young people and another type in vernacular languages for illiterate adults would, in fact, amount to widening the already considerable gap between the "élite" and the mass of ordinary people, and would thus create or contribute to perpetuating an injustice. Such a policy would inevitably discourage ordinary people from participating fully in literacy campaigns, for this type of instruction would not, in any case, raise them above the status of second-class citizens. Unless the vernacular languages are upgraded, efforts to promote literacy in national languages - and no one now questions the need for and effectiveness of literacy training - may eventually be doomed to failure. In our view, therefore, the introduction of national languages into formal education should become one of the priorities of Upper Volta's still very hesitant language policy.¹⁴

But a language policy cannot be rationally planned unless precise information has first been acquired regarding the country's linguistic situation. This is exactly what the Sociolinguistic Atlas is intended to provide. It is naturally disturbing to see how long it has taken to get this project under way; the delay has been due mainly to a shortage of funds but also, perhaps to governmental reluctance to take a stand on the question of the status to be accorded to the national languages. Once again we must express the hope that the funds will be released and that work on the atlas will now proceed according to the timetable established by the CNRST linguists.

What are, in brief, the main problems and explicit needs of the various institutions we have reviewed above?

The general problems of research in Upper Volta were analysed during the "Symposium on Scientific and Technological Policy in Upper Volta" which was held at Ouagadougou from 14 to 17 February 1978. The main issue on which participants focused their attention was the "lack of a clear policy for scientific and technological research" (p. 4).

According to this Symposium, the salient features of scientific and technological research in Upper Volta are as follows:

"dispersion;
very limited human and financial resources;
lack of co-ordination;
failure to turn findings to good account;
tendency for research projects to serve foreign interests better than the development of Upper Volta" (p. 4).
Let us now see how all this applies to linguistics. We shall deal at length with only the first three of the criticisms quoted above.

(a) Lack of a clear language policy

The Decrees which are concerned with the national languages are still very non-committal. It is only in the context of literacy training that we find a fairly clear reference to the possibility of using national languages as media of instruction. But, as we shall explain later, that is bound to have serious consequences.

(l) Shortage of human resources

All the institutions consulted laid stress on the shortage of linguists. At university level, the chief question is how to provide the department of linguistics with enough properly-qualified people, covering various fields of specialization, to undertake the training of the key personnel needed by the country. This problem could be solved, at least partially or temporarily, for certain courses of study by organizing a teacher exchange system between African universities. This presupposes, of course, that every university knows the number and special subjects of fellow-linguists working in sister universities and that the courses are co-ordinated, both as regards their content and as regards the syllabus for each semester or three-month term. In the case of other services, an exchange system would be more difficult to apply, but a system of missions might be envisaged.

It is apparent, therefore, that foreign aid will still be needed for some time to come and Unesco, for example, could play a useful role by offering the services of its various experts.

As regards adult education in the Republic of Upper Volta, progress in literacy work depends to a very great extent on progress in linguistic research, because two fundamental decisions have been taken: to apply the methods of functional literacy training and to use the national languages as the media of literacy training. It is self-evident that if literacy programmes are conducted in national languages, it is necessary to study the structure of those languages - if only to be able to propose coherent systems of orthography. And if literacy training is functional, that is to say, if it is geared to the daily occupations and concerns of the learner, it is necessary to adapt the language used as the medium of instruction to the new needs of its speakers (for example). In addition to this, simple textbooks on various subjects must be published and literacy instructors with a perfect command of the language used and a sound knowledge of its system of orthography must be trained and supervised. No one can deny that a large share of the linguistic research implied by all these tasks will devolve upon specialists in African languages.

But, although the University and the CNEST are now able to recruit an increasing number of linguists, the sectors that utilize the findings of linguistic research - and especially those concerned with literacy - are notoriously short of staff with enough experience in linguistic work. It was only in 1977 that a linguist was at last appointed to what was then the ONERAFA. He needs to be seconded by several other linguists as soon as possible. Other bodies do not have a single linguist at their disposal. A striking example is the FJA, and yet it performs an extremely important function since it trains the very people who will have the closest contacts with the great mass of farmers (93 per cent of whom are illiterate).

The Equal Opportunity Project for Women, important though it is, can likewise employ one or two linguists and only on contract. If it is borne in mind that the illiteracy rate is even higher among women than among men, no one can fail to realize what an enormous task has to be tackled by this single linguist in support of literacy training activities.
Problems also arise in respect of fields of specialization. A review of current needs reveals that they are most acute in the areas of sociolinguistics and language teaching, that is to say, in applied linguistics. The existence of a Department of Linguistics within the country's own University is obviously an asset in itself, since the curricula can, in theory, be adapted to meet national requirements. Unfortunately, a section for applied linguistics cannot be set up for the time being, because there is a shortage of staff and no M.A. course is available. Our graduates are therefore obliged to pursue their studies abroad in universities where they will not necessarily receive the kind of training required for the work that awaits them on their return. This situation breeds anxiety among students, who wonder for what kind of employment they will be fitted after completing their studies, and it may well explain the many end-of-year requests to change courses which are received by the Department of Linguistics. We think that the teaching staff of the Department of Linguistics should be increased and the curricula revised so as to ensure that our students can be used as field-workers as soon as they have graduated.

(c) Dispersion of efforts and lack of co-ordination

A related problem arises in respect of co-operation between the existing institutions. Owing to a fortunate combination of circumstances, all the specialists in Voltaic languages working in Ouagadougou know each other and form a circle of friends, but no administrative structure has yet been established to enable them to collaborate with each other. This fact calls for some explanation, inasmuch as all the linguists are, in principle, members of the CNLV. We have already mentioned that the linguists do their work for the subcommittees on an unfixed basis. In these conditions their progress is necessarily slow and meetings and consultations between linguists tend to be held because the participants are personal friends, instead of being organized as an essential part of professional activities. This gives the impression that all the existing institutions are following separate paths to different goals.

(d) Inadequacy of financial resources

Wherever we were able to obtain information on the contribution made by the Upper Volta Government to an institution's budget, we saw that it was very small. This is largely due, of course, to the astringency of our financial resources. A great effort is still needed, in any case, in order to promote linguistic research and universal literacy: decrees and good intentions are not enough.

In this connection, it is a particularly disturbing fact that the CNLV, which was established as an official body to perform the tasks described above, expects its research workers to give their services on an unpaid basis. It is time to pay more attention to this institution. Since the available resources are so limited, guidelines should be laid down for its research activities, stating, for instance, that studies are requested for specific purposes in a particular area (e.g. to produce a grammar for the teaching of Moore, a Dydic dictionary, a spelling book for Fufulde, etc.) and funds would, of course, be earmarked for the projects in question.

We have already had occasion to draw attention to the need for appropriations to enable the CNST to reactivate the Sociolinguistic Atlas project, to help the IBE to provide training and retraining courses for primary schoolteachers and produce textbooks in anticipation of the reform of education, and to finance the preparation of literacy and post-literacy materials.

It is precisely in the area of finance that the assistance of international organizations such as Unesco is proving indispensable, and we can only applaud the efforts made by this body to promote the economic and social development of our countries.
ANNEX

RESEARCH STUDIES BY UPPER VOLTA SPECIALISTS IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

1971  Mmm Karendame. Imprimerie Presses Africaines, Ouagadougou.
1972/1974

1964  Etude phonologique des emprunts français au mandé (manding de Houndé), Paris 1964.
1975  Pour une transcription pratique des ong jula. Annales de C.L.U.

Delplanque A. 1976  Phonologie Transformationnelle du dagara. Thèse de 3e cycle, Sorbonne Nouvelle, INLCO.


1977 Tons et orthographe en moore. To be published in the Annales of the University of Ouagadougou.


Sawadogo T. 1977 Visualisation de quelques phrases du bòbo fingo.


Sow J. 1975 Contribution à l'étude phonologique du dagara.


Enquête lexicale thématique sur le dagara, Nice 1974.


L'alphabet national. To be published in the Annales of the ESLSH University of Ouagadougou.

Soroko G.J. 1975 Essai d'Étude Comparée des classes de Mete en Français et en Moore (langue principale de Haute-Volta). Thèse de 3e cycle, University of Dijon.


1977 "A non critical survey of constraints in T.G."

1977 To be published in the Annales of the University of Ouagadougou.

1977 "Noun plural formation in Bissa (barka); unpublished."
1. It was possible to prepare this document thanks to the very useful suggestions and comments kindly made by a large number of fellow-linguists and heads of public institutions. We should like to mention in particular Messrs. I. Diallo, Permanent Secretary of the National Commission for Unesco, L. Debire, Director of the DDEP at the INE, M. Poussi, Director of the CVRS, H. Tamboura, an administrative official of the FIA and all his linguistic colleagues. I am deeply grateful to them.

However, the views expressed are those of the author and do not commit the above mentioned persons nor Unesco, which agreed to finance the study.

2. The "Projet de Budget Atlas Sociolinguistique de Haute-Volta 1978-1981" (Budget Estimates for the Sociolinguistic Atlas of Upper Volta 1978-1981), which is more up-to-date than Flathell's original project, puts the total cost of research at 48,843,000 CFA francs.


4. We have not been able to consult the pioneer study carried out by De Lavergne de Tressant (Inventaire Linguistique de l'Afrique Occidentale Française et du Togo, Dakar: IFAN).

5. We agree with Heine (1970) that Fulfulde does not rank as a lingua franca. We also think that Moore, a dominant language, is spoken mainly by the Mossi, who occupy the country's central plateau, and is now used less widely as a contact language than in the past.

6. This is not to say that Greenberg's study is faultless or entirely accepted by all linguists. Fodor (1968), for example, severely criticizes Greenberg's methodology and Manessy (1969) describes other attempts to classify certain Upper Volta languages.

7. Since there is no certainty that all the languages have now been identified, it would be risky to claim that all of them fall into one or other of these subfamilies. A non-classified language is in fact mentioned in a recent article by Father Prost (Prost, 1973).

8. The difference and lack of correlation between genetic relationship and typological relationship were expounded in Greenberg's well-known theories (e.g. in 1956 and 1970).

9. Much of the material mentioned in the table showing the "State of linguistic research on the African languages of Upper Volta" needs to be adapted for use in schools: most of the dictionaries should be revised, if only because of their systems of orthography, and none of them is entirely in a national language. The grammars and other works concerned with phonology or morphology have usually been written for specialists and still have to be interpreted and adapted.

10. Of these 9 teachers, 2 are employed on a part-time basis and 1 delivers all his lectures to students of modern languages.

11. One may ask, of course, why Moore and Dyula were chosen out of all the national languages. It is partly because they may be regarded as representative of the major subfamilies of languages spoken in Upper Volta (Gur and Mande), but also because the body of teachers includes specialists in these languages. Indeed, it is for lack of a specialist that no language of the West Atlantic group has yet been chosen as a curriculum subject.
12. Decree No. 75/488/PRES/EN of 16 December 1975 mentions, as linguist members, only "the teachers of African linguistics at the University of Ouagadougou". However, at the last Regular Assembly of the Commission, a proposal was made to the effect that all linguists should be ex-officio members of the CNLV.

13. See the Opening Address delivered by the Minister of National Education at the fourth General Assembly of the CNLV on 21 March 1978, the text of which is reproduced in the Proceedings of the Assembly.

14. It is unnecessary, in any case, to wait until the reform of education is carried through before taking steps in this direction. Instruction in reading and writing the mother tongue could be included in the curricula of the present system and these skills could be offered as an optional subject in official examinations such as the CEPE (Certificate of Basic Education), the Brevet (lower secondary certificate) or the Baccalaureat, on the same footing as drawing, music and physical education.
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