THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I
UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES

DEPARTEMENT DE LANGUES AFRICAINES ET LINGUISTIQUE

A STEP TOWARDS THE STANDARDISATION OF KÀNSWÉYNSÉY
(A grassfield bantu language)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA « MAITRISE » IN LINGUISTICS

By
AKERIWEH
B.A. Applied Foreign Languages

Supervised by :
Dr. SADEMBOUO ETIENNE
Chargé de Cours

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DEDICATION

To:

God Almighty;

my Parents, Late Pah Njei Ngie Peter;

Mama Elizabeth Neck;

Penn Simon Taninkeng and

Shiri Suzana;

my late sister, Mme Rose Mengwi;

my sister, Mrs Acham Debora.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ALCAM: Atlas linguistique du Cameroun

I.C: Identical Context

G.A.C.L: General Alphabet of Cameroonian Languages

H/ˊ: High tone

L/ˋ: Low tone

LH/ˇ: Rising tone

HL/ˆ: falling tone

Gloss: Glossary

C: Consonant

V: Vowel

Vl: Voiceless

Vc: Voiced

N: Nasal

NC: Pre-nasalised Consonant

#: Word Boundary

...: Word Initial Position

... #: Word Final Position

/ /: Phonemic Transcription

[ ]: Phonetic Transcription

+ : Presence / Possible

ø : Zero

Sple: Simple

Lab: Labialised

Pal: Palatalised

⟶ : Becomes

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0. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. Scope of Study

We intend in the following work to make an attempt at the standardisation of the kànswéynséy language. This will be achieved by:

- Systematically examining all the sounds of this language in order to determine which among them are phonemes and which of them are not, phonology being the first step in a standardisation process,
- Analysing the way sounds are combined in this language to form syllables and words,
- Laying basis for the development and use of this language in its written form after its thorough survey.

0.2. Justification of Choice of Topic

As any other language, the kànswéynséy language interests many linguists. This language has more than fifteen thousand (15.000) native speakers and is up till date not standardised. Nevertheless, some linguistic works have been carried on this language as can be seen in some booklets we consulted at the Summer Institute of Linguistics (S.I.L.). Among these were: A word list Bamessing/English (1978) by Shaub Vremi and Willi Schaub (unpublished), The Bamessing Folkstories (1982) by Bibi: J.M.

In these works, we found that there was nothing done to support the written literature of kànswéynséy speakers. This is why we chose to make at least a first step in the standardisation of this language.

Another reason for undertaking this work is that through it, we want to contribute to the development of African languages in general, and of Cameroonian languages in particular, and to put at the disposal of kànswéynséy speakers and of linguists, a work that will enable them write texts in this language.

Finally, this work was motivated by Professor Maurice Tadadjeu's speech at the 1995 National Education Forum in Cameroon (Yaounde) in which he stressed the need to include the national languages of Cameroon in the different school curricula.

0.3. General Information about the Nsey people

0.3.1. Geographical and Historical Backgrounds

0.3.1.1. Geographical Background

Formerly called Bamessing, the Nsey village is situated in the Ngoketungia Division of the North-West Province of Cameroon. This village is the gate way into this Division coming from the provincial capital, Bamenda. It is one of the thirteen (13) villages that make up the vast Ndop Plain. Nsey village occupies a fertile land surface with a population of fourteen thousand (14.000) inhabitants according to the 1984 population census. It shares boundaries with Babungo to the north, Bamunka to the north-east, Bamali to the south-east, Balikumbat to the south and Babanki to the west. All these villages except the last one, are within the Ndop Plain.

The position of this village at the entrance and at the extreme end of the Division may have contributed in rendering the kə̀nswéynséy language different from the other languages of the Ndop Plain.

0.3.1.2. Historical Background

Like many other tribes of the North-West Province, the Nsey tribe originated from Tikari in the fifteenth century. In fact, the repeated attacks on the Sao kingdom forced these people out of Tikari. They then moved westwards led by Fon Felanteu in search of a land where they could settle. While looking for their home, these people were divided into two groups. One group decided to remain in Bamessinge in the West Province because they did not want to move any longer and the other group entered the Ndop Plain. This is why the Bamessinge people and the Nsey people have some similar cultural aspects. When entering Ndop, these people were attracted by a gigantic tree standing in an uninhabited land below the hills. They then settled there

and after a short while, the oldest man among them whose name was Nsey died. As he was the first person to be buried there, his followers decided to name this place after him. This spot where the land of Nsey was initiated is found in Mbahang in Pah Kemende's compound, one of the princes who came from Tikari. The Nsey fon's palace is also around this area.

Although all the people of the Ndop Plain came from Tikari, they did not follow the same tracks. While some went towards the Bamboutos hills, others went through Foumban. This is why in this Division, even though all the languages are Grassfield Bantu languages, they are divided into three sub-groups which are the Ring sub-group, the Noun sub-group and the Ngemba sub-group (Dieu Michel et al, 1983).

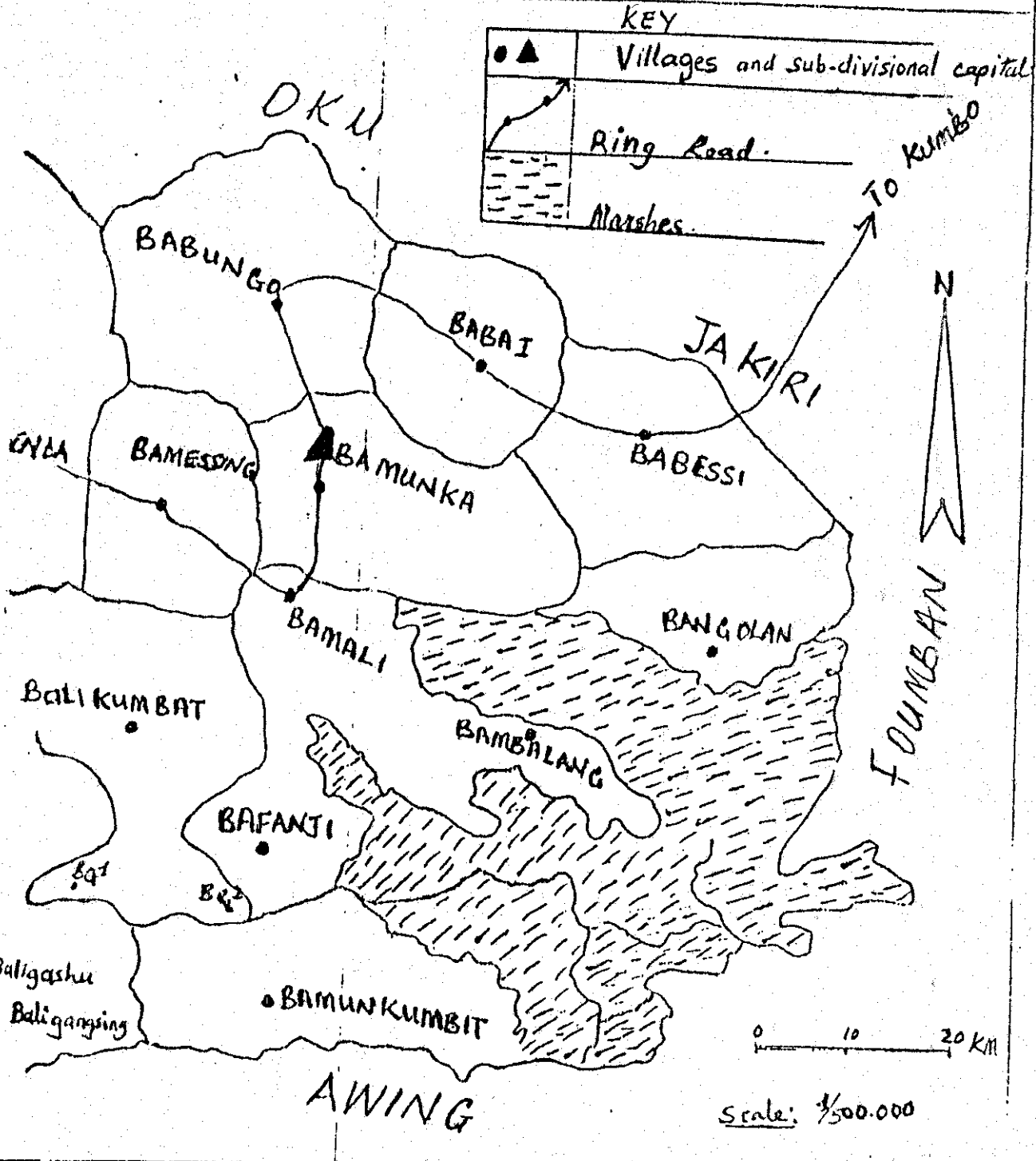
0.3.2. Socio-economic Situation

In addition to agriculture which is their main economic activity, the resourceful and highly productive people of Nsey carry out many social and economic activities geared towards the development of their village. These activities include hunting, weaving, carving, pottery, trade and other co-operative economic activities.

The large-scale cultivation of both food and cash crops is the main occupation of most families in Nsey. The main types of cash crops include coffee, raffia palm wine and most of all rice. Some food crops which are also sold include cocoyams, maize, sweet potatoes, plantains, cassava and bananas.

The Nsey people indulge in activities such as traditional dances, drinking, birth, marriage and death celebrations and meeting groups where they save money. The main type of food eaten by these people is corn-fufu and huckle berry (a type of vegetable).

Language being the vehicule of culture and knowledge, it is probable that the standardisation of the kènswéynséy language will help a lot in keeping the culture of the Nsey people unchanged and in transferring it from one generation to another. It will also serve in ameliorating their economic situation.



Source: L'Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun.

0.4. The Language

0.4.1. Linguistic Classification

Among various linguistic classifications of African languages, Joseph, H. GREENBERG's (1963: 171 pp) classification appears to be the most understood and globally accepted one. In his classification of African languages, he identifies four major families:

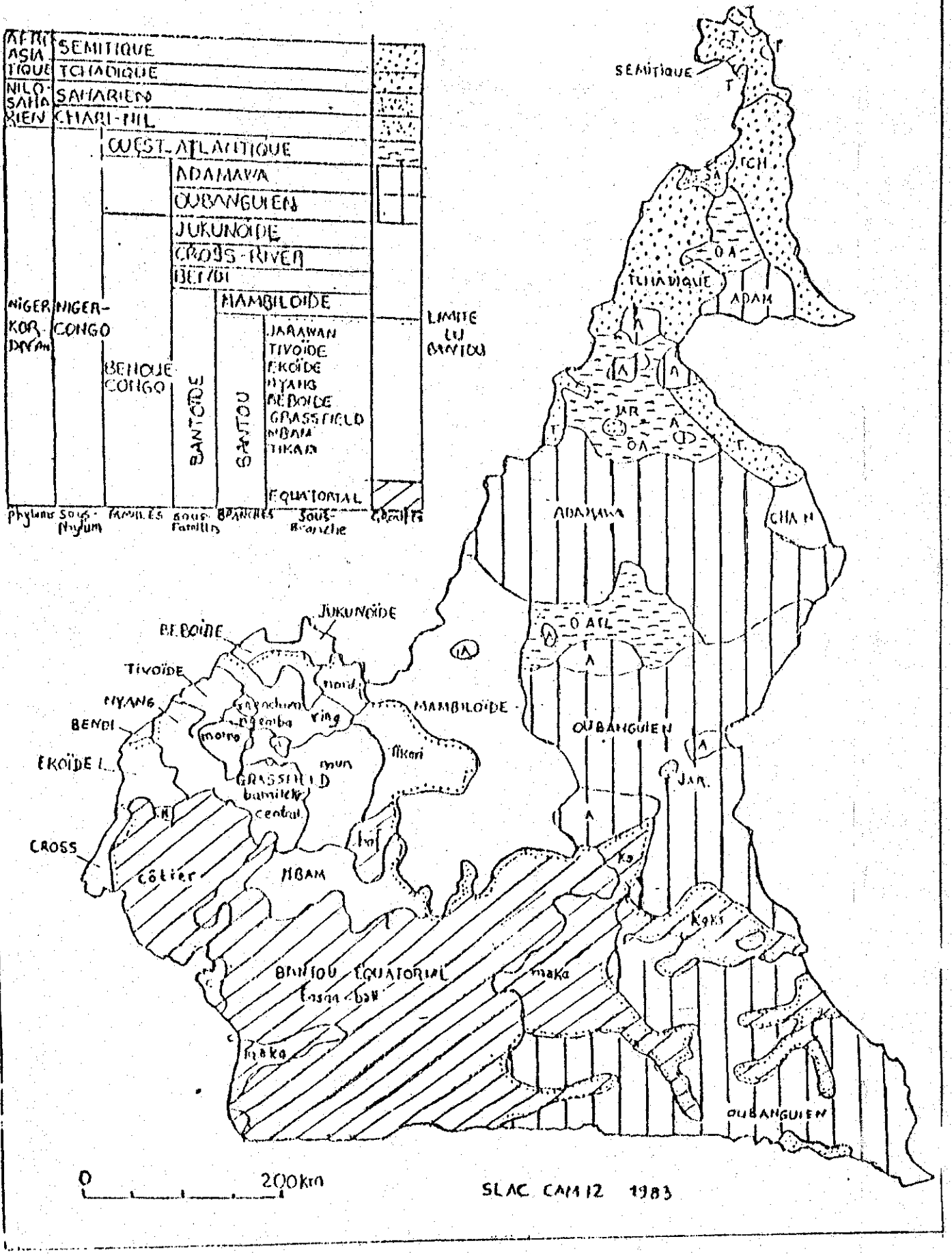
1. The Niger-Congo-Kordofanian family
2. The Nilo-Saharan family
3. The Afro-Asiatic family
4. The Khoisan family.

The kànswéynséy language, code 841, belongs to the Niger-Kordofanian phylum as can be seen in the following diagram:

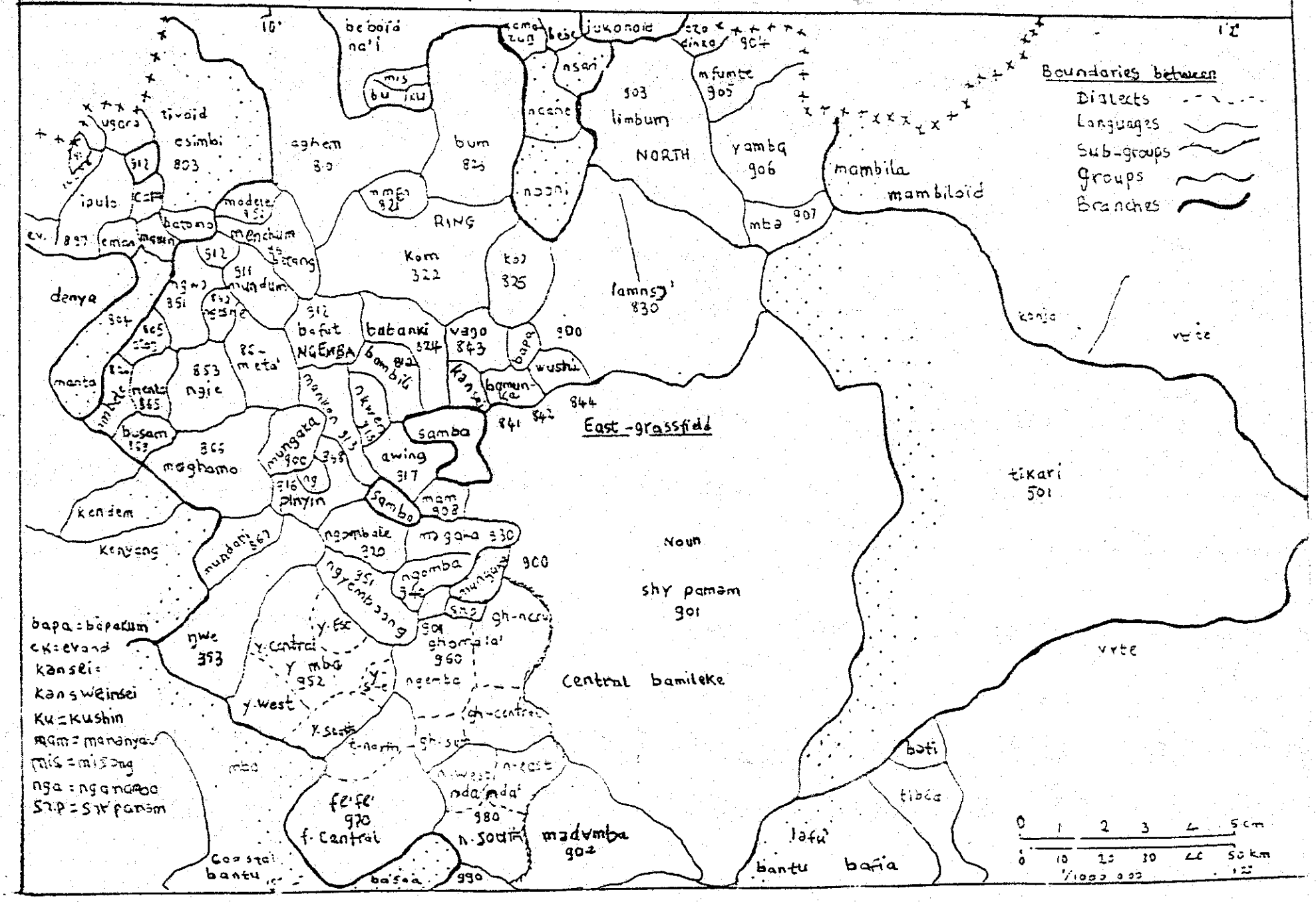
Niger-Kordofanian
↓
Bantoid
↓
Bantu
↓
Grassfield-Bantu
↓
Ring
↓
Kànswéynséy.

(See maps on pp. 7, 8)

FAMILLES ET GROUPES LINGUISTIQUES DU CAMEROUN

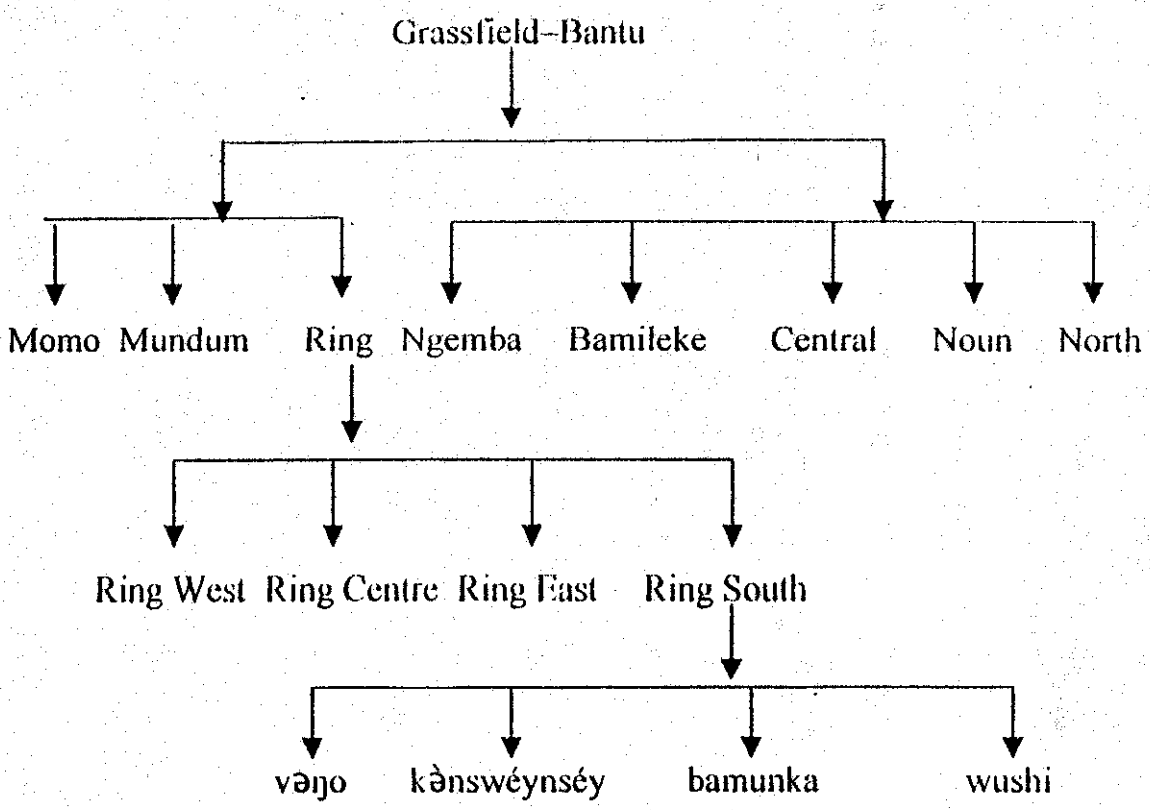


GRASSFIELD BANTUS



SOURCE : S.T.I. CAMEROON

The following diagram is an elaborate presentation of Grassfield Bantu languages:



(Source: Michel Dieu et als, 1983).

0.4.2. Typology

The kànswéynséy language, like many African languages, is a tone language. That is one in which tones affect the meanings of words. In this language, there are words that are spelt orthographically the same but which have different meanings when pronounced with different tones. Below are some examples:

[kətáŋ]: "box"

[kətàŋ]: "elephant"

[fúŋ]: "leg"

[fûŋ]: "close"

This language has a nominal class system as can be seen in the following words:

[kàtɔ́]: "head"

[bàtɔ́]: "heads"

[jí]: "name"

[tàjí]: "names"

[fànyúŋ]: "bird"

[mànyúŋ]: "birds"

The main sentence structure of the kànswéynséy language is that of subject-verb-object (S.V.O).

Examples:

Affirmative sentence: [mà zé kàbáŋ]: "I am eating fufu"
I eat fufu

Negative sentence: [mà zé kàbáŋ bé]: "I am not eating fufu"
I eat fufu not

Interrogative: [wà zé kàbaŋ mà ?]: "Are you eating fufu?"
you eat fufu question marker

Through these examples, we realise that this language is an agglutinative language because, it is easy to determine morpheme boundary in a sentence.

0.4.3. Literature Review

As we earlier said, some works have been done on the kànsweynséy language notably: A Word List Bamessing/English (1978) by Shaub Vremi and Willi Schaub (unpublished), The Bamessing Folkstories (1982) by Bibi, J.M.

These works were done without the preliminary step in the standardisation of a language, that of bringing out the sound system of the language. Nevertheless, Bibi

Joseph (1982) brought out a sound inventory at the beginning of his book. Among these sounds were:

a) Vowels

Short Vowels

[i] [+] [ʉ] [u]

[e] [o]

[ɛ] [ə] [ɔ]

[æ] [a]

Long Vowels

[ii] [++] [uu]

[ee] [oo]

[ɛɛ] [əə] [ɔɔ]

[ææ] [aa]

b) Simple Consonants

[t] [c] [k] ['']

[b] [d] [j] [g]

[m] [n] [ny] [ŋ]

[l]

[f] [s]

[v] [z] [gh] [h]

[y]

c) Pre-nasalised Consonants

[nt] [nc] [ŋk]

[mb] [nd] [nj] [ŋg]

[mf] [ns]

d) Labialised Consonants

[t^w] [k^w]

[b^w] [d^w] [g^w]

[c^w]

[j^{w}]
[ny^{w}] [ŋ^{w}]
[l^{w}]
[s^{w}]
[z^{w}]
[y^{w}]

When investigating the language, we found that what he considered as long vowels were not actually long vowels. He thought they were long because they are uttered with a contour tone.

This lack of a linguistic study and literature on the language is what has brought us to study the phonology of the language in order to promote the development of its literature, through some general principles that we will propose in our study.

0.5. Methodology

0.5.1. Theoretical Framework

The method used in this study is the structural approach. According to ANDRE MARTINET (1970, 1982), a structural phonology analysis aims at identifying the various phonic elements of a language and classifying them according to their role in this language. This exercise will permit us to determine the different phonemes and variants of phonemes. To achieve this, sounds will be compared in identical context (I.C), in analogous context (A.C) and in complementary distribution (C.D).

In the identical context, sounds will be contrasted in minimal pairs of words, that is, pairs of words that are almost similar and in which the difference in meaning comes from the sounds being contrasted.

Example:

[nʉ]: "put down"

[mʉ]: "finish"

In the absence of these absolute minimal pairs in some cases, we shall oppose sounds that will be almost minimal, in the analogous context, that is in a context where the sounds being contrasted will not be the only difference, but where the contexts of appearance of those sounds, even though not identical, will at least be "similar enough so that the difference between the two sounds in contrast should be caused by the contexts" (URSULA WIESEMANN et al, 1983).

Example:

[pat]: "pen"

[kan]: "spoon"

For those sounds that will neither be opposed in the (I.C) nor in the (A.C) we shall examine their environment to see whether they are distributed in different contexts of appearance.

Concerning standardisation, we are going to study some criteria under the sociolinguistic and organisational frameworks according to SADEMBOUO, E. (1991: pp. 21-23). These criteria will include demography, the language use in the Nsey community and the public's opinion.

0.5.2. Data Collection

Our data was collected using the "Questionnaire d'Enquête Linguistique" (QEL), the 149 words of the ALCAM data, to which we added some other words. We had a total of 1000 words. We went to Nsey village and collected this data for three weeks through oral interview with various age groups. After collecting the data from the native speakers who are born and bred in Nsey, we came back to Yaounde and did a cross checking with some educated kə̀nswéynséy native speakers.

The alphabet system we used in collecting our data is that of the General Alphabet of Cameroon languages (1979).

0.5.3. The Informants

Our data was collected from the native speakers whose names, age, profession and places of residence are found in the following table:

No.	Name	Surname	Age	Profession	Place of Residence
1	Melenfe	Boniface	56 years	Primary School Teacher	Nsey village
2	Gwain	Christina	46 years	Primary School Teacher	Nsey village
3	Bibi	Joseph M.	52 years	Secondary School Teacher	Bamenda
4	Wankweng	Née P.W. Bongwa	30 years	Secondary School Teacher	Yaounde
5	Bibi	Princely	29 years	Student	Yaounde
6	Ngibang	Ansela	32 years	Trader	Nsey village

0.5.4. Plan of Work

Our work will be divided into three (3) main parts: paradigmatic study, syntagmatic study and standardisation.

In the paradigmatic part, we shall bring out an inventory of basic sounds. After this, we will analyse distinctive units, interpret complex sounds before defining and classifying the distinctive units.

In the second part, we shall describe the syllable and analyse all the possible sound combinations of this language.

In the third part, we shall proceed to the standardisation of this language by studying some preliminaries and by establishing an alphabet and bringing out some orthographic principles.

Nevertheless, we should note that to standardise a language does not only end at analysing its sound system, studying its vitality and viability and establishing an alphabet and some orthographic principles. What we are going to do is just a step. Much will still have to be done to reach the basic standardisation of this language, among these the elaboration of readers, spelling-books, short-stories books, dictionaries, grammar books and much more.

PART ONE

PARADIGMATIC ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 1

TONES

kènswéynséy, as we have earlier said is a tone language. That is, one which uses tones to distinguish the meaning of words. According to Ursula Wiesemann et al, (1983: 84) a tone is "la hauteur relative de la voix pendant l'exécution d'un son". That is, a tone is the rise and fall of the voice during the production of a sound. While analysing the kènswéynséy language, we found words that were almost similar and their meanings differed only because of their tone patterns.

Example:

[fʉ́ ŋ]: "leg"

[fʉ̂ŋ]: "lack"

[k^{w}ɛ̀]: "bachelor"

[k^{w}ɛ̂]: "harvest"

1.1. Inventory of Tones

Two types of tones are found in the kènswéynséy language: level tones and contour tones.

1.1.1. Level Tones

A tone is said to be level when its height remains unchanged during the pronunciation of a syllable. The tonal system of this language is made up of two level tones: a high tone and a low tone.

1.1.1.1. The High Tone: [́]

It is the highest musical height during the production of a syllable. It is abbreviated H. It is found in words like:

[ŋɔ́]: "month"

[sɔ́]: "teeth"

[hún]: "here"

This high tone is found on nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns.

1.1.1.2. The Low Tone: [̀]

It is the lowest tonal level in a language. It is characterized by a low tension and a relatively slow vibration of the vocal cords. Its abbreviation is L. This low tone can be found in this language, on the following words:

[yὲ]: "person"

[nὲ]: "with"

[fùŋ]: "chief"

[kὲ']: "only"

Like the high tone, the low tone is found on nearly all the grammatical categories or parts of speech in the kὲnswéynséy language.

1.1.2. Contour Tones

A Contour tone is a tone rendered with a varying musical height during the production of a syllable. This variation is considered as the passage of a tone from a given level tone to another level tone.

During our analysis, we discovered that the kὲnswéynséy language has two contour tones, among which the rising tone [ˇ] and the falling tone [^].

1.1.2.1. The Rising Tone: [ˇ]

This tone is also known as the low-high tone. It is abbreviated: L.H. It starts with a low tone and ends with a high tone. We find it on words like:

[nšɛ̀]: "tail"

[bǎŋ]: "behind"

[gǔ]: "coldness".

This rising tone is found on all the parts of speech in this language except on verbs.

1.1.2.2. The Falling Tone: [^]

This tone can also be called a high-low tone. It is abbreviated: H.L. It starts with a high tone and ends with a low tone. We find it on words like:

[kə̀kə̂]: "bench"

[cə̂]: "mouth"

[wûŋ]: "ten"

[ntə̂ŋ]: "message".

This falling tone appears on nouns, adjectives, adverbs and never on verbs.

1.2. Tonemes

J. Dubois et al, (1973: 516 p) define the toneme as an accentuated high unit that helps to oppose two meaningful units. In other words, the toneme is for the tone what the phoneme is for the sound. Generally, tones are classified in two categories: lexical tones, which differentiate lexis and grammatical tones, which mark the difference between the infinitive form, the aspect, the tense and the mood.

1.2.1. Lexical Tones

1.2.1.1. The High (H) Toneme

This toneme is distinct from others as can be seen in the following words:

H/L [kə̀táŋ]: box" / [kə̀tâŋ]: "elephant"

[lɔ́ŋ]: "husband" / [lɔ̀ŋ]: "hot"

[kʉ́]: "claypot" / [kʉ̀]: "look for"

H/LH [táŋ]: "five" / [tǎŋ]: "old"

[ŋgó']: "termite" / [ŋgǒ']: "year"

[lwé]: "nose" / [lwě]: "bile"

H/HL [mètɔ́w]: "to whistle" / [mètɔ̂w]: "to jump"
[cí]: "in-law" / [cî]: "cover"

1.2.1.2. The Low (L) Toneme

This toneme is a distinct one. Its status is established through the following contrasts:

L/H: [mèkàŋ]: "magic" / [mèkáŋ]: "to squeeze"
[ʃù̀ŋ]: "black" / [ʃúŋ]: "leg"
[tù̀ŋ]: "burn" / [tú́ŋ]: "up"

L/LH: [gù]: "cold" / [gǔ]: "coldness"
[mbà']: "button" / [mbǎ']: "fog"
[ŋù]: "fur" / [ŋǔ]: "moon"
[nsè]: "soil" / [nsě]: "tail"

L/HL: [mèfâŋ]: "to fear" / [mèfâŋ]: "to get fat"
[k^{w}è]: "bachelor" / [k^{w}ê]: "harvest".

1.2.1.3. The Low-High (L.H) Toneme

This toneme is distinct from others as can be seen in the following words:

LH/HL [jǔ]: "hunger" / [jû]: "to plant a stick"
[ŋkǔ]: "rope" / [ŋkû]: "cripping grass"
[ntǐ]: "louse" / [ntî]: "to drag, to pull"

LH/H [wɔ̌ŋ]: "egg" / [wɔ́ŋ]: "farm"
[ŋkə̌']: "coq" / [kə́']: "penis"
[nsě]: "tail" / [nsé]: "down"

LH/L [ŋkǔ]: "rope" / [ŋkù]: "date palm"

[jě]: "path" / [mə̀jè]: "to come".

1.2.1.4. The High-Low (H.L) Toneme

It acquires its status as a toneme, in the following contrasts:

HL/LH (see LH/HL)

HL/H [ŋgê]: "rip" / [ŋgé]: "shell"

[kə̀nsû]: "car / [kə̀nsú]: "sissongho"

HL/L [wâ]: "wing" / [wà]: "operate"

[kwêŋ]: "hill" / [kwèŋ]: "tin"

To conclude this paragraph, we can say that the four tones found in this language are all tonemes for they are all pertinent. In the following lines, we shall analyse the different grammatical tones found in this language.

1.2.2. Grammatical Tones: Tone Variation

We noticed during our data collection, that lexical tones are not stable. This brought us to look for the principles that govern this tone variation. But here, we shall limit ourself to the study of the genetive and the tense markers.

1.2.2.1. The Genetive Marker or the Noun Complement Marker

Given the following examples:

[yèlóŋ]: "friend" [ŋgû]: "fowl"

[fùŋ]: "chief" [kə̀fwá]: "thing"

[fŭŋ]: "leg" [mbà]: "soup"

[yɛ̀lɔ̂ŋ fùŋ]: "the chief's friend"

[fə̂ŋ fùŋ]: "the chief's leg"

[ŋgû fùŋ]: "the chief's fowl"

[mbǎ fùŋ]: "the chief's soup"

[kàfwâ fùŋ]: "the chief's thing"

We see that in this language, there is no particular word or morpheme that indicates or marks the genetive. But we notice a tone variation, that is, a high tone (H) becoming a high-low (H.L) tone, and a low tone (L) becoming a Low-High (L.H) tone.

As such in kànswéynséy language, possession is marked by a tone variation.

1.2.2.2. The Tense Marker

This language, like many other African languages, has four verb tenses which are the present tense, the future tense, the recent past tense and the far past tense. While studying verb conjugation in this language, we found that contrary to some languages that mark differences in tenses by varying the tones, the kànswéynséy language simply maintains the verb's tone and root in the present tense. For the other tenses, some morphemes are added to the root whose tone pattern remains the same. This was realised after having studied a data of ten (10) verbs bearing different tones.

For the recent past (past 1), we have the prefix morpheme "tá". The far past (past 2) uses "nà" as its marker and the future tense "yɛ̀".

Example:

[mətɔ']: "to walk"

Present tense: [mə tɔ']: "I am walking" or "I walk"
I walk

Recent past tense: [mə tá tɔ']: "I have walked"
I past(1) walk

Far past tense: [mà nà tɔ́']: "I had walked"
I past(2) walk

Future tense: [mà yè tɔ̀']: "I will walk"
I future walk

A deep study of this phenomenon of tone variation, due to its grammatical function, will be carried later in a different work as it seems to be very important for the standard orthography of the language.

CHAPTER 2

VOCALIC PHONEMES

To begin with, we will first say what we understand by the term phoneme. TROUBETZKOY, N.S. (1939: 48) defines the phoneme as "a phonological symbolic sign which has a self-evident function". WIESEMANN, U. et al, (1983) further explain it by saying that it is the smallest sound unit that helps to distinguish words' meanings. Like many other languages, the kə̀nswéynséy language has vocalic and consonantic phonemes.

2.1. Identification of Vocalic Phonemes

In this language, we found ten (10) vocalic sounds. After analysing them, we will see whether they are all phonemes or whether some of them are variants of the same phoneme.

2.1.1. Phonic Inventory of Vowels

Sound	Illustration	Gloss
[i]	[wí]	"fire"
[e]	[mfé]	"sorcery"
[ɛ]	[ncɛ́]	"mother"
[æ]	[fæ̀]	"thunder"
[ʉ]	[mʉ́']	"due"
[ə]	[fə̀]	"jaw"
[a]	[wǎŋ]	"child"
[u]	[ŋú]	"breast"
[o]	[ŋó]	"month"
[ɔ]	[cɔ̂]	"mouth"

2.1.2. Phonic Vowel Chart

Place of Articulation / Degree of openness	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ʉ	u
Mid-High	e	ə	o
Mid-Low	ɛ		ɔ
Low	æ	a	

As we have earlier said in our introduction, we shall determine vocalic phonemes by contrasting sounds in identical context (I.C), in Analogous context (A.C) and in Complementary distribution (C.D) if necessary.

2.1.3. Vowels' Pertinence

1. The Phoneme /i/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

i/e: [màbíŋ]: "to accept" [màbéŋ]: "to sleep"

[kàndwî]: "hippotamus" [kàndwê]: "banana"

i/ʉ: [nyí]: "animal" [nyú]: "fight"

[líŋ]: "brother/sister" [lʉ̀ŋ]: "sweet"

[màbíŋ]: "to answer" [màbʉ́ŋ]: "to dance"

i/u: [màbí]: "to explode" [màbú]: "to chase off"

[nyí]: "animal" [nyù]: "hair"

/i/ High front unrounded vowel.

2. The Phoneme /e/

Its pertinence is established, through the following comparisons:

e/i: (see i/e)

e/ɛ: [sê]: "speak" [sɛ̂]: "to cut with scissors"

[gè]: "beard" [gɛ̀]: "go"

e/ə: [mé]: "neck" [mə̀]: "I, me"

[fĕ]: "heart" [fə̀]: "where"

/e/: Mid-high Front Unrounded Vowel

3. The Phoneme /ɛ /

Its pertinence is established through the following comparisons:

ɛ/e: (see e/ɛ)

ɛ/æ: [nsɛ̀]: "soil" [nsæ̀]: "comb"

[ncɛ́]: "mother" [ncǽ]: "sky"

/ɛ/: Mid-low Front unrounded vowel.

4. The Phoneme /ʉ/

Its pertinence is established through the following comparisons:

ʉ/i/: (see i/ʉ)

ʉ/ə: [kʉ̀]: "boundary" [kə̀]: "what"

[kə̀ncʉ́]: "brush" [kə̀ncə́]: "home"

ʉ/u: [fʉ̀ŋ]: "lock" [fùŋ]: "chief"

[gʉ̀]: "voice" [gù]: cold"

/ʉ/: High central rounded vowel.

5. The Phoneme /ə /

Its pertinence is established through the following comparisons:

ə/e: (see e/ə)

ə/a: [bə́']: "to broke" [bá']: "to approach"

[màkə̀]: "to want" [màkà]: "to tie"

ə/ʉ: [fə̀]: "where" [fʉ́]: "from"

[bə́]: "they" [bʉ̀]: "ugliness"

/ə/: Mid-high Central Vowel

6. The Phoneme /a/

Its pertinence is established through the following comparisons:

a/ə: [kə̀dá']: "power" [kə̀də́']: "wound"

[bàŋ]: "Hatred" [bə̀ŋ]: "terrible"

a/ɛ: [màcá']: "to see off" [məcɛ́']: "to greet"

[njà']: "no" [njɛ̀']: "outside"

a/æ: [wá]: "hand" [wǽ]: "beating"

[bà]: "near" [bæ̀]: "red"

/a/: low central unrounded vowel.

7. The Phoneme /æ/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

æ/ɛ (see ɛ/æ)

æ/a (see a/æ)

/æ/: low front unrounded vowel.

8. The Phoneme /u/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

u/o: [ŋkŭ]: "rope" [ŋkŏ]: "type"

[màtó]: "to spite" [màtú]: "to vomit"

u/ʉ: [fúŋ]: "thrust" [fʉ́ŋ]: "leg"

[búŋ]: "stomach" [bʉ̀ŋ]: "return"

u/ɔ: [màtúŋ]: "to roast" [màtɔ́ŋ]: "to send"

[túŋ]: "suffocation" [tóŋ]: "stranger"

/u/: High back rounded vowel.

9. The Phoneme /o/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

o/: [kàtó]: "ear" [kàtɔ́]: "head"

[bó]: "dog" [bɔ́]: "corner"

[dò]: "death celebration" [dɔ̀]: "pile"

o/u: [kàlóŋ]: "dry season" [kàlúŋ]: "fright"

[màgò]: "to fall" [màgú]: "to wear"

/o/: Mid-high back rounded vowel.

10. The Phoneme /ɔ/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ɔ/o: [ndɔ́w]: "cup" [ndów]: "maize pudding"

[ŋgɔ̌']: "stone" [ŋgŏ']: "year"

ɔ/u: (see u/ɔ)

/ɔ/: Mid-low back rounded vowel.

As we can see, all the ten (10) vowels are phonemes. So our phonemic chart will be the same as the phonic chart.

2.1.4. Phonemic Vowel Chart

Position of Tongue / Height of Tongue	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ʉ	u
Mid-high	e	ə	o
Mid-low	ɛ		ɔ
Low	æ	a	

2.1.5. Definition and Classification of Vocalic Phonemes

2.1.5.1. Definition

To define a sound is to give its features.

/i/: High front unrounded vowel.

/e/: Mid-high front unrounded vowel.

/ɛ /: Mid-low front unrounded vowel.

/æ/: Low front unrounded vowel.

/ʉ/: High central unrounded vowel.

/ə/: Mid-high central unrounded vowel.

/a/: low central unrounded vowel.

/u/: High back rounded vowel.

/o/: Mid-high back rounded vowel.

/ɔ/: Mid-low back rounded vowel.

2.1.5.2. Classification

- According to the level of openness:

High	i	ʉ	u
Mid-High	e	ə	o
Mid-Low	ɛ		ɔ
Low	æ	a	

- According to the place of articulation:

Front:	i	e	ɛ	æ
Central:	ʉ	ə		a
Back:	u	o		ɔ

2.2. The Kànswéynséy Vocalic System

2.2.1. System at Word Initial Position

Out of the ten (10) vocalic phonemes we found in this language, only one (1) stands at this position.

Table:

Place of Articulation / Degree Of openness	Front	Central	Back
Low		a	

This vowel is found at the initial position of words as in the following examples:

[àkə́]: "father"

[àŋ]: yes"

2.2.2. System at Word Medial Position

Out of the ten (10) vowel phonemes of this language nine (9) occupy this position.

Table:

Place of Articulation / Degree of Openness	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ʉ	u
Mid-high	e	ə	o
Mid-low	ɛ		ɔ
Low		a	

We find these vowels at the medial position in the following examples taken from our data:

[lìŋ]:	/lìŋ/	"brother/sister"
[béy]:	/béy/	"life"
[kɛ́']:	/kɛ́'/	"light"
[kʉ́ŋ]:	/kʉ́ŋ	"crab"
[kə̀']:	/kə̀'/	"only"
[fà']:	/fà'/	"work"
[cúŋ:	/cúŋ/	"price"
[bɔ̀']:	/bɔ̀'/	"slave"
[bɔ́']:	/bɔ́'/	"pumpkin"

2.2.3. System at Word Final Position:

— All the ten (10) vowels of this language occupy this position.

Table:

Place of Articulation / Degree Of Openness	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ʉ	u
Mid-high	e	ə	o
Mid-low	ɛ		ɔ
Low	æ	a	

We find them in the following examples:

[wí]:	/wí/	"fire"
[gé]:	/gé/	"chin"
[kàg^{y}é]:	/kàgyé/	"grass"
[bæ̀]:	/bæ̀/	"red"
[kʉ̀]:	/kʉ̀/	"boundary"
[ákà]:	/ákà/	"father"
[kàfwâ]:	/kàfwâ/	"something"
[ŋgû]:	/ŋgû/	"fowl"
[sǒ]:	/sǒ/	"fish"
[cɛ́tɔ́]:	/cɛ́tɔ́/	"throat"

Having done the analysis of vocalic phonemes, we will continue in the following chapter with consonantic phonemes.

CHAPTER 3

CONSONANTIC PHONEMES.

While examining our data, we distinguished fifty-five (55) consonantic sounds in this language. In order to know whether they are all phonemes or variants of phonemes, we will proceed as we did with the vowels.

3.1. Identification of Consonantic Phonemes

3.1.1. Phonic Inventory of Consonants

Like the vowels, our consonants'inventory is taken from our data. Below are some illustrations:

Sounds	Illustrations	Gloss
[b]	[bə̀tú']	"night"
[b^w]	[wáŋb^wô]	"baby"
[b^y]	[kə̀b^yéŋgê]	"veranda"
[t]	[táŋ]	"five"
[t^w]	[kə̀t^wâ]	"intestine"
[t^y]	[mə̀t^yé]	"to grow"
[d]	[kə̀dʉ́']	"place"
[c]	[cô]	"mouth"
[c^w]	[mə̀c^wà']	"to lend"
[c^y]	[mə̀c^yé]	"to cut"
[j]	[jʉ̌]	"hunger"
[j^w]	[mə̀j^wà']	"to split"
[k]	[mə̀káŋ]	"to squeeze"
[k^y]	[k^yé]	"money"
[k^w]	[kə̀k^wéy]	"bone"

[g]	[màgó]	"to fall"
[g^{w}]	[g^{w}ò]	"shoe"
[g^{y}]	[g^{y}æ]	"leaf"
[']	[màmé']	"to throw"
[mf]	[mfέy]	"bicycle"
[mb]	[mbɔ̂ŋkʉ́]	"potter"
[nt]	[ntɔ̌]	"six"
[nt^{w}]	[nt^{w}ólóŋ]	"iron smith"
[ns]	[mànsέlέ]	"lightening"
[ns^{w}]	[kínswó]	"sissongho"
[nd]	[ndàlà']	"sweet potato"
[nd^{w}]	[nd^{w}é]	"dress/cloth"
[nc^{y}]	[nc^{y}é]	"lie"
[nc]	[kàncé]	"day"
[nj]	[njɔ̂]	"thorn"
[ŋk]	[kàŋkɔ́']	"dumb"
[ŋg]	[sá'ŋgɔ̀ŋ]	"worm"
[ŋgw]	[ŋgwà]	"seed"
[m]	[màmʉ̀]	"to finish"
[n]	[mànɔ̀']	"to be"
[ny]	[ŋkúnyà]	"pig"
[ny^{w}]	[fə̀nywé]	"knife"
[ŋ]	[kàŋáŋ]	"scorpion"
[ŋw]	[ŋwà']	"clean"
[f]	[màfi' i]	"to tell"

[f^{w}]	[kə̀fwɔ́]	"medicine"
[f^{y}]	[f^{y}ə̀]	"mouse"
[z]	[mə̀zé]	"to eat"
[zh]	[zhì]	"name"
[zh^{w}]	[zh^{w}à]	"snake"
[gh]	[ghá']	"big"
[h]	[húŋ]	"here"
[l]	[yɛ̀lɔ́ŋ]	"friend"
[lw]	[l^{w}é]	"nose"
[w]	[lɔ̀w]	"nervil"
[y]	[yɛ̀']	"time"
[yw]	[y^{w}ó]	"honey"
[s]	[sɔ̌]	"fish"
[sw]	[mə̀s^{w}éy]	"to speak"
[sy]	[s^{y}æ̀]	"comb"

labialised & palatalised

l^{w} or lw } need of systematicity

l^{y} or ly } rigorousness

3.1.2. Phonic Chart of Consonants

This chart includes all the Kənsweynséy language's consonants, both simple and modified ones.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Bilabial			Labio-dental			Alveolar			Palatal			Velar			Glottal			Labio-vela
		Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple	Lab	Pal	Sple
Plo-sive	Oral vl							t	t^w	t^y	c	c^w	c^y	k	k^w	k^y	'			
	Oral vc	b	b^w	b^y				d						g	g^w	g^y				
	Prenatal vl	mb							nt	ɲtw	nc		nc^y	ŋk						
	Prenatal vc		mb			mf			nd	ɲdw	ɲj			ŋg	ŋg	$ŋg^w$				
									ns	ɲsw										
	Nasal	m							n		ny	ny^w		ŋ		ŋ				
Obs-truents	Fricative vl				f	f^w	f^y	S	s^w	s^y							h			
	Fricative vc							z			zh^w		gh							
	Lateral							l	l^w											
	Glide									y	v^w									w

3.1.3. Interpretation Problems

Some ambiguities we face in human languages pose serious interpretation problems in linguistic studies. These ambiguities and their attendant interpretation problems can better be analysed on the basis of the internal organisation and structure of the language under study. Among the phonological aspects that pose problems in linguistic analysis, we have sounds that can be treated either as single units or as a sequence of units and sounds that can either be considered as vowels, as consonants or as both. In the following lines we are going to clarify these problems as far as the kànswéynséy language is concerned.

3.1.3.1. Interpretation of [w] and [y]

As a result of their semi-syllabic and semi-consonantic qualities, glides pose some interpretation problems. The high front unrounded vowel [i] and the high back rounded vowel [u] are similar to the palatal and labio-velar glides [y] and [w] respectively. In this language, we realise that [y] and [w] are full consonants. We say this because of the following reasons:

- Vowels are generally tone bearers, which is not the case with consonants.
- Consonants are units that appear always in front of vowels which is the case of [y] and [w].

The following words illustrate the consonantal quality of [y] and [w] at initial, inter-vocalic and final positions:

Word	Gloss
[mə̀yɛ́ŋ]	"to melt"
[yɛ̀tóŋ]	"stranger"
[mə̀yéy]	"to see"
[yí]	"name"

[mətéy]	"to read"
[yílə]	"sluggish"
[wí]	"fire"
[wá]	"hand"
[mətów]	"to dig"
[ghɔ̌w]	"farm"
[məwáy]	"to put"
[wéy]	"market"

3.1.3.2. Interpretation of Sound Sequences

3.1.3.2.1. Labialisation

Labialisation according to linguists is a change undergone by a phoneme when followed by lip rounding. In other words, it is a phonological process where a consonant takes the round quality of a secondary articulation super-imposed on it.

The problem here is to determine whether the labialised consonants are a result of the glide formation or whether on the contrary, they are just complex consonants to be considered as such.

We talk of glide formation when a vowel loses its syllabicity to become a semi-vowel or a semi-consonant. Talking of glide formation will therefore mean that the sequence [cwv] comes from /cvv/. But this is not the case, given that the structure of the kànswéynséy language does not permit a sequence of /vv/. Furthermore, the labialisation process does not involve all the consonants. For this reason, we think that in the examples below, the structure [cwv] at the surface structure would be /cv/ in the deep structure and not /cvv/ since neither the /vv/ sequence nor the /cc/ sequence exist in this language.

Example:

Word	Gloss
[məfwə]	"to blow"
[fə̀nywé]	"knife"
[ywó]	"honey"
[gwò]	"shoe"
[lwé]	"nose"
[məswá]	"to insult"

The following chart is that of the labialised sounds of the kànswéynséy language.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosives	Oral vl				c^w	k^w
	Oral vc	b^w			j^w	g^w
	Prenasal			nt^w nd^w ns^w		$ŋg^w$
	Nasal				ny^w	$ŋ^w$
Obstruents	Fricative		f^w	s^w		
	Lateral			l^w		
	Glide				y^w	

From this chart, we see that the kànswénséy language has fifteen (15) labialised consonants.

3.1.3.2.2. Palatalisation

We talk of palatalisation when there is a forward displacement of the place of articulation of a phoneme. In other words, palatalisation is a phonological process

whereby a consonant has the palatal [y] super-imposed on it as a secondary articulation. Like labialisation, it is restricted only to some kànswéynséy consonants. After thorough investigations, we realised that the sequence [c^{y}v] in this language derives from the /cv/ structure since the language system does not allow neither a vowel sequence /vv/ nor a consonant sequence /cc/. Below are some examples:

Example:

Words	Gloss
[màs^{y}æ]	"to comb"
[k^{y}é]	"money"
[g^{y}é]	"share"
[kyà]	"ceiling"
[màc^{y}à]	"to pass"

The following chart is that of the palatalised sounds that exist in the kànswéynséy language.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plosives	vl			t^{y}	c^{y}	k^{y}
	Oral vc	b^{y}				g^{y}
	Pre-nasal				nc^{y}	
Obstruents	vl		f^{y}	s^{y}		
	Fricatives vc					

From the above chart, we notice that this language has eight (8) palatalised consonants.

3.1.3.2.3. Interpretation of Pre-nasals

During our analysis, we had a lot of problems with pre-nasals. In the following lines, we shall try to throw some light on their status. For this to be achieved we shall apply three (3) principles which are the principle of context of occurrence, the principle of commutation and that of pluralisation.

- **NC Sequences with a Voiced C**

Given a nasal N standing for all the nasals in kènswéynséy, let us apply these three (3) principles to pre-nasals in order to determine their status. The same will be done in NC sequences where C is voiceless.

- **First Principle: Context of Occurrence:**

The sequences mb, nd, ŋg and nj appear at the initial and medial positions in the following examples:

mb:	[mbé]: "world"	[kə̀mbí]: "crocodile"
nd:	[ndàlà']: "sweet potato"	[kə̀ndàŋ]: "whistle"
ŋg:	[ŋgáŋ]: "a market day"	[sàŋgɔ̀ŋ]: "worm"
nj:	[njɔ̂]: "thorn"	[mə̀njàlí]: "earring"

The structure of the language does not permit them to appear word finally.

- **Second Principle: Commutation**

The NC sequences with a voiced C obey the commutation principle as can be seen in the following examples:

mb/b:	[mbɔ̂ŋ]: "builder"	[bɔ̂ŋ]: "meet"
nd/d:	[ndó']: "thief"	[dó']: show"
g/g:	[ŋgɔ̀']: "stone"	[gɔ́']: "remain"
nj/j:	[njàŋ]: "axe"	[jà']: "no"

- Third Principle: Pluralisation

Singular	Plural
[mbʉ́]: "wall"	[tə̀mbʉ́]: "walls"
[kə̀ndà]: "cricket"	[bə̀ndà]: "crickets"
[ŋgɔ̀']: "stone"	[tə̀ŋgɔ̀']: "stones"
[njɔ̂]:"thorn"	[tə̀njɔ̂]:"thorns"

From this analysis, we can conclude that the NC sequences with a voiced C respect the three (3) principles of context of occurrence, commutation and pluralisation.

- **NC Sequences with a Voiceless C**

As we have earlier said, we shall try to determine the status of the NC sequences with a voiceless C. We shall do this, following our three principles of context of occurrence, commutation and pluralisation.

- **First Principle: Context of Occurrence**

The sequence k, mf, nt, ns and nc appear at the initial and medial positions in the following examples:

ŋk:	[ŋkû]: "rope"	[fə̀ŋkɔ́']: "cow"
mf:	[mfòŋ]: "first"	[ŋûmfɛ́]: "moon"
nt:	[ntí']: "little"	[nə̀ntɛ̀]: "a lot"
ns:	[nsɛ̌]: "ground"	[kə̀nsɛ́y]: "file"
nc:	[ncé]: "mother"	[kə̀ncé]: "day"

The structure of the language does not permit them to appear word finally.

- **Second Principle: Commutation**

The NC sequences with a voiceless C obey to the commutation principle as can be seen in the following examples:

ŋk/k:	[ŋká']: "firewood"	[ká']: "grasshopper"
mf/f:	[mfʉ́']: "measurement"	[fʉ́']: "tell"
nt/t:	[ntôŋ]: "message"	[tôŋ]: "send"
ns/s:	[nsʉ̂]: "jar"	[sʉ̂]: "slide"
nc/c:	[ncùŋ]: "tête à tête"	[cúŋ]: "price"

- **Third Principle: Pluralisation**

Singular	Plural
[ŋkû]: "rope"	[tàŋkû] : "ropes"
[mfʉ́']: "measurement"	[tàmfʉ́']: "measurements"
[fàntáŋ]: "branch"	[màntáŋ]: "branches"
[nsæ̌]: "tail"	[tànsæ̌]: "tails"
[ŋjɔ̀']: "chest"	[tànjɔ̀']: "chests"

From the above analysis, we can say that the NC sequences with a voiceless C respect the three principles of context of occurrence, commutation and pluralisation.

To conclude, we will say that all the pre-nasals found in this language have a monophonematic homorganic status. We will also like to note here that during our analysis, we also noticed that most nouns starting with these pre-nasalised sounds, especially those with a voiceless c like [nt], [ns], [ŋk], [nc], [nt"]...have a Ø (zero) prefix at their singular form and [tà] as their plural prefix.

Below is the chart of the pre-nasalised sounds of this language.

Place of Articulation / Degree of Openness	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Pre-nasal	mb	mf	nt nt^w nd nd^w ns ns^w	nc nc^y nj	ŋk ŋg $ŋg^w$

Having finished with the sound inventory of the kànswéynséy language, we shall continue in the following paragraphs with the identification of phonemes.

3.1.4. Inventory of Consonantic Phonemes

According to ARVOSOTAVALTA, quoted by TROUBETZKOY (1971: 48)

"a phoneme is the smallest fraction of a sequence of sounds occurring in the speech flow, which requires a more or less specific time for its production and which can be recognised and identified. It is further capable of forming recognisable and identifiable linguistic forms by combining with sounds of like nature." In other words, a phoneme is a pertinent sound, that is one that helps us to differentiate two almost similar words in which the difference in meaning comes from the said sound only.

As we have done with vowel phonemes, we shall proceed to determine consonantic phonemes by contrasting sounds in minimal pairs of words. These are pairs of words that are almost similar and in which the only difference is at the sounds being opposed. Nevertheless, if some suspicious pairs cannot stand in the identical context (I.C) we shall examine them looking at their context of appearance. This will enable us see whether it is the context or not that renders these sounds different.

3.1.4.1. Opposition in Identical Context

The Phoneme /b/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

b/by: [bɛ̀]: "ripe" / [bʸɛ̀]: "front"

[bé]: "birth" / [bʸé]: "done/ready"

b/bw: [bó]: "dog" / [bʷó]: "tired"

[kəbá']: "table" / [kəbʷá']: "calabash"

b/m: [məbé']: "to carry" / [məmé']: "to throw"

[məbʉ̀]: "to bend" / [məmʉ̀]: "to hollow out"

/b/: voiced bilabial stop.

The Phoneme /bʸ/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

bʸ/b: (see b/bʸ/)

bʸ/bʷ: [bʸá]: "pear" / [bʷá]: "soft"

/bʸ/: voiced platalised bilabial stop.

The Phoneme /bʷ/

The pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

bʷ/b: (see b/bʷ)

bʷ/bʸ: (see bʸ/bʷ)

/bʷ/: voiced labialised bilabial stop.

The Phoneme /mb/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

mb/b: [mbʉ́]: "wall" / [bʉ́]: "bush plum"

[mbɔ̌ŋ]: "real" / [bɔ̌ŋ]: "meet"

mb/m: [mbé]: "world" / [mé]: "neck"

/mb/: pre-nasalised labial stop.

The Phoneme /m/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

m/b: [mə̀mà']: "to contribute" / [mə̀bà']: "to gather"

[mé']: "throw" / [bé']: "carry"

m/mb: (see mb/m)

m/n: [mə̀mʉ̀]: "to finish" / [mə̀nʉ́]: "to put"

[mɔ̀']: "one" / [nɔ̀']: "sit"

/m/: nasal bilabial stop.

The Phoneme /mf/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

mf/f: [mfòŋ]: "first" / [fòŋ]: "on"

[mfʉ́']: "measurement" / [fʉ́']: "tell"

/mf/: Pre-nasalised labiodental fricative.

The Phoneme /f/

Its pertinence is established through the following comparisons:

f/mf: (see mf/f)

f/fw: [fɔ̀]: "leaf" / [fʷɔ́]: "out"

[fə̀]: "where" / [fʷə̀]: "fever"

/f/: voiceless labiodental fricative.

The Phoneme /fʸ/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

fʸ/f: [fʸé]: "mouse" / [fé]: "valley"

/fʸ/: voiceless palatalised labiodental fricative.

The Phoneme /f^{w}/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

f^{w}/f: (see f/f^{w})

/f^{w}/: voiceless labialised labiodental fricative.

The Phoneme /w/

It acquires its pertinence through the following comparisons:

w/y: [màwâ]: "to fan" / [màyâ]: "to loosen"

[kàwá]: "hand" / [kàyâ]: "illness"

[wùŋ]: "this" / [yúŋ]: "buy"

w/gh: [wáŋ]: "child" / [gháŋ]: "scold"

/w/: labiovelar glide.

The Phoneme /y/

It acquires its pertinence in the following comparisons:

y/w: (see w/y)

y/y^{w}: [yí]: "name"/[y^{w}í]: "woman"

/y/: palatal glide.

The Phoneme /t/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

t/d: [màto']: "to pierce" / [màdo']: "to show"

[dúŋ]: "play" / [túŋ]: "suffocate"

t/t^{w}: [màtéy]: "to call" / [màt^{w}éy]: "to bury"

[tâ]: "already" / [t^{w}â] "burst"

/t/: voiceless alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /t^w/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

t^w/t: (see t/t^w)

t^w/: [mət^{w}ó]: "to mix" / [mə^{w}ó]: "oil"

/t^w/: voiceless labialised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /t^y/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

t^y/t: [t^yê]: to mix" / [têy]: "read"

[t^yé]: "three" / [té]: "stick"

/t^y/: voiceless palatalised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /d/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

d/t: [dâŋ]: "light "fire" / [tâŋ]: "five"

[mədúŋ]: "to play" / [mətúŋ]: "to burn"

d/n: [mədó]: "to fit" / [mənó]: "to drink"

/d/: voiced alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /nt/

nt/t: [ntôŋ]: "message" / [tôŋ]: "send"

[ntáŋ]: "branch" / [tâŋ]: "five"

nt/nt^w: [kəntà]: "spoon" / [kənt^{w}à]: "riddle"

/nt/: pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /nt^w/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

ntw/nt: (see nt/nt^w)

ntw/t^{w}: [nt^{w}á]: "pierce" / [t^{w}á]: "burst"

[mànt^{w}éy]: "stroke" / [màtwéy]: "to bury"

/nt^{w}/: voiceless labialised pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /nd/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

nd/d: [ndó']: "thief" / [dó']: "show"

nd/nd^{w}: [kàndà]: "cricket" / [kànd^{w}à]: "divorce"

[kàndàŋ]: "whistle" / [kànd^{w}àŋ]: "ill-luck"

nd/nt: [ndàŋ]: "fungus" / [ntáŋ]: "branch"

nd/: voiced pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /nd^{w}/

Its pertinence can be established through the following comparisons:

nd^{w}/nd: (see nd/nd^{w})

/nd^{w}/: voiced pre-nasalised labialised alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /ns/

Its pertinence is determined by the following comparisons:

ns/s: [nsû]: "Jar" / [sû]: "slide"

ns/ns^{w}: [kànséy]: "file" / [kàns^{w}éy]: "language"

[kǐnsé]: "sugarcane" / [kǐns^{y}ɛ́]: "sand"

ns/ns^{y}: [kànséy: "file" / [kànsé]: "huckle berry"

/ns^{w}/: pre-nasalised alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme /ns^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ns^{w}/ns : (see ns/ns^{w})

/ns^{w}/: pre-nasalised labialised alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme /n/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

n/m:	[nù]: "put down"	/	[mù]: "finish"
	[nɔ̀']: "be/sit"	/	[mɔ̀']: "one"
n/ny:	[nû]: "alone"	/	[nyú]: "fight"
	[nɔ̀']: "be/sit"	/	[nyɔ̀']: "annoyed"
/n/d:	[màndò]: "to drink"	/	[màdò']: "to fit"

/n/: nasal alveolar stop.

The Phoneme /s^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

s^{w}/s:	[s^{w}ò]: "cultivate"	/	[sò]: "fish"
	[màs^{w}á]: "to insult"	/	[màsâ]: "to harvest"
	[kàs^{w}á]: "hoe"	/	[kàsâ]: "wall"
s^{w}/s^{y}:	[kís^{w}é]: "sand"	/	[kís^{y}è]: "screan"
	[swè]: "grave"	/	[syæ̀]: "comb"

/s^{w}/: voiceless labialised alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme /s/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

s/s^{w}:	[màsá]: "to tear"	/	[màs^{w}á]: "to insult"
	[séy]: "profit"	/	[s^{w}éy]: "say"
s/s^{y}:	[màsè]: "to count"	/	[màs^{y}æ̀]: "to comb"
s/z:	[só]: "fish"	/	[zò] "wife"
	[sé]: "eye"	/	[zé]: "defeat"

[mə̀só]: "to wash" / [mə̀zò]: "to kill"

/s/: voiceless alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme /s^{y}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

s^{y}/s: [s^{y}é]: "sink" / [sé]: "eye"

s^{y}/s^{w}: (see s^{w}/s^{y})

/s^{y}/: voiceless palatalised alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme /z/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

z/s: (see s/z).

/z/: voiced alveolar fricative.

The Phoneme / l /

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

l/l^{w}: [lé]: "hide" / [l^{w}é]: "nose"

[mə̀là']: "to tell" / [mə̀l^{w}á']: "unripe"

l/d: [lúŋ]: "beg" / [búŋ]: "stomach"

/l/: Alveolar liquid.

The Phoneme / l^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

l^{w}/l: (see l/lw).

/l^{w}/: labialised alveolar liquid.

The Phoneme /c/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

c/c^{w}: [cá']: "soil, mud" / [c^{w}á']: "meeting"

[màcà']: "to jump" / [màc^{w}á']: "to borrow"

[cɛ̌']: "greet" / [c^{w}ɛ́']: "fall off"

[màcàŋ]: "to chew" / [màc^{w}áŋ]: "to vaccinate"

c/c^{y}: [màcé]: "to stay" / [màc^{y}é]: "to cut"

c/j: [cú]: "leprosy" / [jŭ]: "hunger"

[cúŋ]: "join" / [jùŋ]: "back"

/c/: voiceless palatal stop.

The Phoneme /c^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

c^{w}/c: (see c/c^{w}).

c^{w}/cy: [c^{w}étà]: "decoration" / [c^{y}étà]: "to slice"

c^{w}/j^{w}: [màc^{w}á']: "to borrow" / [màj^{w}à']: "to split"

/c^{w}/: voiceless labialised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /c^{y}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

c^{y}/c^{w}: (see c^{w}/c^{y}).

/c^{y}/: voiceless palatalised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /j/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

j/c: [màjé]: "to come" / [màcé]: "to stay"

[jŭ]: "hunger" / [cú]: "leprosy"

/j/: voiced palatal stop.

The Phoneme /j^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

j^{w}/c^{w}: (see c^{w}/j^{w}).

j^{w}/j: [j^{w}à']: "splid" / [jà']: "no"

/j^{w}/: voiced labialised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /nc/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

n/c: [ncúŋ]: "tête à tête" / [cúŋ]: "price"

[ncɛ́]: "mother" / [cɛ́]: "there"

nc/nc^{y}: [ncɛ̌]: "marshy area" / [nc^{y}ɛ̌]: "sky"

/nc/: Pre-nasalised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /nc^{y}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

nc^{y}/nc: (see nc/nc^{y}).

/nc^{y}/: voiceless pre-nasalised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /nj/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

nj/nc: [njù̱ŋ]: "dream" / [ncù̱ŋ]: "all"

nj/j: [njàŋ]: "axe" / [jà']: "no"

/nj/: voiced pre-nasalised palatal stop.

The Phoneme /ny/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ny/nyw: [nyí]: "animal" / [nywí]: "God"

[nyá']: "aubergine" / [nywá']: "write"

ny/n: [nyú̱]: "fight" / [nú̱]: "alone"

[nyɔ̀']: "annoyed" / [nɔ̀']: "be, sit"

/ny/: palatal nasal stop.

The Phoneme /ny^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ny/ny^{w}: (see ny/ny^{w}).

/ny^{w}/: labialised palatal nasal stop.

The Phoneme /k/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

k/g: [màkó]: "to die" / [màgò]: "to fall"

[màkú]: "to eat something hard" / [màgú]: "to wear"

[kʉ́]: "pot" / [gʉ̀]: "voice"

k/k^{w}: [kà]: "what" / [kwà]: "four"

[kó]: "death" / [k^{w}ó]: "forest"

[màkà]: "to want" / [màk^{w}à]: "to give"

/k^{w}/: voiceless labialised velar stop.

The Phoneme /k^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

k^{w}/k: (see k/k^{w}).

k^{w}/g^{w}: [k^{w}ó]: "forest" / [g^{w}ó]: "shoe"

[màk^{w}á]: "to cash" / [màg^{w}á]: "to grind"

/k^{w}/: voiceless labialised velar stop.

The Phoneme /k^{y}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

k^y/k: [màk^{y}á]: "to fry" / [màká]: "to tie"

k^y/g^y: [k^{y}é]: "money" / [g^{y}é]: "share"

[k^{y}à]: "ceiling" / [g^{y}à]: "herb"

/k^y/: voiceless palatalised velar stop.

The Phoneme /g/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

g/g^y: (see k/g).

g/g^w: [gò]: "fall" / [g^{w}ò]: "shoe"

g/g^y: [màgɛ̀]: "to discuss" / [màg^{y}ɛ̀]: "to stitch"

[gà]: "go" / [g^{y}à]: "separate"

/g/: voiced velar stop.

The Phoneme /g^w/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

g^w/g: [g^{w}ó]: "skin" / [gó]: "start"

g^w/k^w: [màg^{w}á]: "to grind" / [màk^{w}á]: "to cash"

[g^{w}ó]: "shoe" / [k^{w}ó]: "forest"

g^w/ŋg^w: [g^{w}à]: "cut" / [ŋg^{w}à] "seed"

g^w/g^y: [màg^{w}àtə]: "to iron" / [màg^{y}àtə]: "to arrange"

/g^w/: voiced labialised velar stop.

The Phoneme /ŋk/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ŋk/k: [ŋká']: "firewood" / [ká']: grasshopper"

[ŋkó]: "kind" / [kó]: "death"

ŋk/ ŋg: [ŋkə̀']: "cock" / [ŋgə̀']: "sufferance"

[ŋkŭ]: "tail" / [ŋgŭ]: "fowl"

[ŋkɔ́']: "juju" / [ŋgɔ́']: "termite"

/ŋk/: voiceless pre-nasalised velar stop.

The Phoneme /ŋg^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ŋg^{w}/ŋg: [ŋg^{w}à]: "seed" / [ŋgá] : "hazelnut"

[ŋg^{w}án]: "sour" / [ŋgán]: "name of a market day"

ŋg^{w}/g^{w}: (see g^{w}/ŋg^{w})

/ŋg^{w}/: voiced labialised pre-nasalised velar stop.

The Phoneme /ŋ/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ŋ/ŋg: [ŋá']: "open" / [ŋgá']: "most"

ŋ/g: [ŋŭ]: "rain" / [gú]: "wear"

/ŋ/: velar nasal stop.

The Phoneme /ŋg/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

ŋg/g: [ŋgɔ́']: "stone" / [gɔ̀]: "remain"

[mə̀ŋgí]: "tinny" / [mə̀gì]: "to add"

ŋg/ŋk: [ŋgɔ́']: "stone" / [ŋkɔ́']: "juju"

[ŋgû]: "fowl / [ŋkû]: "tail"

/ŋg/: voiced pre-nasalised velar stop.

The Phoneme /g^{y}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

g^{y}/g: [mèg^{y}ɛ]: "to stitch" / [mègɛ]: "to discuss"

[g^{y}è]: "separate" / [gè]: "go"

g^{y}/k^{y}: (see k^{y}/g^{y})

/g^{y}/: voiced palatalised velar stop.

The Phoneme /ŋ^{w}/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

/ŋ^{w}/ŋ: [mèŋwá']: "to spark, to glitter" / [mèŋá']: "to open"

/ŋ^{w}/: labialised velar nasal stop.

The Phoneme /gh/

It gains its pertinence through the following comparisons:

gh/g: [mèghè]: "to suffer" / [mègè]: "to go"

[ghǔ]: "handle of a bag" / [gǔ]: "voice"

[ghɔ́w]: "spear" / [gɔ́w]: "poison"

/gh/: voiced velar fricative.

Having finished with the analysis in identical context and in analogous context, we realise that not all the sounds we found have been examined. So we shall continue our analysis by studying the context of appearance of the remaining sounds.

3.1.4.2. Variation

3.1.4.2.1. Contextual Variation

According to TROUBETZKOY, (1971: 46) a contextual variation is a situation where two sounds of a given language, related acoustically or articulatorily never occur in the same environment. Sounds that are in contextual variation are therefore the combinatory variants of the same phoneme. A contextual variation is also known

as a complementary distribution. This said, let us study the various variants of the kànswéynséy language. We have just one case in this language: [h] and [ʾ].

Following these contexts:

[h]	[ʾ]	[ʾ]
# - a	# u -	ʉ - ʉ
# - u	# ɔ -	a – a
# - ɛ	# ʉ -	ɔ - a

[h] and [ʾ] are in complementary distribution here because [h] appears only at word initial position while [ʾ] appears medially and finally. We therefore conclude that [h] and [ʾ] are variants of the same phoneme /h/ which is rendered [ʾ] at the middle and final positions (non-initial positions) while [h] appears only at the initial position.

/h/: voiceless glottal fricative.

3.1.4.2.2. Free Variation

Two sounds of a given language are free phonetic variants of a single phoneme if they occur in exactly the same environment and are interchangeable without a change in the meaning of the word (TROUBETZKOY, 1971: 46).

Generally, there are three (3) types of free variations: facultative, individual and stylistic free variations. During our data analysis, we realised that all our free variation cases fall under the first type. The sounds concerned are [zh] and [y] and their labialised counterparts [y^w] and [zh^w]. The native speakers of this language use these sounds indifferently.

The following examples were got:

[zh]		[y]
[fə̀zhɛ̀]: "vein"	/	[fə̀yɛ̀]: "vein"
[kə̀zhá]: "illness"	/	[kə̀yá]: "illness"

[zhɔ̀nʉ́zhɔ̀nʉ́]: "bee" / [yɔ̀nʉ́yɔ̀nʉ́]: "bee"

[zhí]: "name" / [yí]: "name"

[kəfwâzhí]: "food" / [kəfwâyí]: "food"

[məzhɛ̀]: "to make, to cause" / [məyɛ̀]: "to make, to cause"

[zh^{w}]		[y^{w}]
[zh^{w}à]: "snake"	/	[y^{w}à]: "snake"
[zh^{w}ó]: "honey"	/	[ywó]: "honey"
[zh^{w}í]: "woman"	/	[ywí]: "woman"
[zh^{w}ó]: "sing"	/	[ywó]: "sing"

Because [zh] and [y] are used indifferently, we conclude that they are allophones of the same phoneme /y/. this is the same with [zh^{w}] and [y^{w}] which are variants of the same phoneme /y^{w}/.

/y/: palatal glide.

/y^{w}/: labialised palatal glide.

Out of the fifty-five (55) consonantic sounds we found in this language fifty-two (52) are phonemes as we have seen in our analysis.

In the next step, we are going to define those phonemes.

3.1.5. Definition of Consonantic Phonemes

/b/: voiced bilabial stop.

/b^{w}/: voiced labialised bilabial stop.

/b^{y}/: voiced palatalised bilabial stop.

/mb/: voiced pre-nasalised bilabial stop.

/m/: Bilabial nasal.

/mf/: voiceless pre-nasalised labio-dental fricative.

/f/: voiceless labio-dental fricative.

/f^{w}/: voiceless labialised labio-dental fricative.

/f^{y}/: voiceless palatalised labio-dental fricative.

/w/: Labio-velar glide.

/t/: voiceless alveolar stop.

/t^{w}/: voiceless labialised alveolar stop.

/t^{y}/: voiceless palatalised alveolar stop.

/d/: voiced alveolar stop.

/nt/: voiceless pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

/nt^{w}/: voiceless labialised pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

/nd/: voiced pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

nd^{w}/: voiced labilised pre-nasalised alveolar stop.

/ns/: voiceless pre-nasalised alveolar fricative.

/ns^{w}/: voiceless labialised pre-nasalised alveolar fricative.

/n/: Alveolar nasal.

/s/: voiceless alveolar fricative.

/s^{w}/: voiceless labialised alveolar fricative.

/s^{y}/: voiceless palatalised alveolar fricative.

/z/: voiced alveolar fricative.

/ l /: Alveolar lateral.

/l^{w}/: labialised alveolar lateral.

/c/: voiceless palatal stop.

/c^{w}/: voiceless labialised palatal stop.

/j/: voiced palatal stop.

/j^{w}/: voiced labialised palatal stop.

/nc/: voiceless pre-nasalised palatal stop.

/nc^{y}/: voiceless palatalised pre-nasalised palatal stop.

/nj/: voiced pre-nasalised palatal stop.

/ny/: Palatal nasal.

/ny^{w}/: Labialised palatal nasal.

/y/: palatal glide.

/y^w/: Labialised palatal glide.

/k/: voiceless velar stop.

/k^w/: voiceless labialised velar stop.

/k^y/: voiceless palatalised velar stop.

/g/: voiced velar stop.

/g^w/: voiced labialised velar stop.

/g^y/: voiced palatalised velar stop.

/ŋk/: voiceless pre-nasalised velar stop.

/ŋg/: voiced pre-nasalised velar stop.

/ŋg^w/: voiced labialised pre-nasalised velar stop.

/ŋ/: velar nasal.

/ŋ^w/: Labialised velar nasal.

/gh/: voiced velar fricative.

/h/: voiceless glottal fricative.

/c^y/: voiceless palatalised palatal stop.

3.1.6. Classification of Consonantic Phonemes

To classify phonemes is to give their phonological internal organization. We shall use the same pertinent characteristics of manner and place of articulation used above. Despite the fact that nasals belong to the class of sonorants, we shall put them separately in order to better distinguish them from obstruents and fricatives.

3.1.6.1. Manner of Articulation

Plosives (stops)

			t	t^w	t^y	c	c^w	c^y	k	k^w	k^y
b	b^w	b^y	d			j	j^w		g	g^w	
			nt	nt^w		nc			ŋk		
mb		mf	nd	nd^w		ŋj			ŋg	ŋg^w	

ns ns^{w}

m n ny ny^{w} ŋ ŋ^{w}

Obstruents

f f^{w} f^{y} s s^{w} s^{y} h

z

l l^{w}

y y^{w} w

Sonorants

l l^{w}

y y^{w} w

Pre-nasals

nt ntw nc nc^{y} ŋk

mb mf nd nd^{w} nj ŋg ŋg^{w}

ns ns^{w}

Nasals

m n ny ny^{w} ŋ ŋ^{w}

3.1.6.2. Place of Articulation

Labials

b b^{w} b^{y}

mb mf f f^{w} f^{y}

m

What does obstruent mean? Event stop obstruent?

(y y^{w} w) → Do these form a natural class in other words, can they be grouped together?

Alveolars

t t^w t^y d n s s^w s^y z l l^w

nt nt^w nd nd^w ns

Palatals

c c^w c^y j j^w nc nc^y nj ny ny^w zh zh^w

Velars

k k^w k^y g g^w gy ŋk ŋg $ŋg^w$ ŋ $ŋ^w$ gh w

Glottal

h

3.1.7. The Phonemic Table of the kànswéynséy Consonantic Phonemes

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Labial			Alveolar			Palatal			Velar			Glottal
		Simple	Labia-lized	Palata-lized	Sim-ple	Labia-lized	Pala-talized	Sim-ple	Labia-lized	Palata-lized	Sim-ple	Labia-lized	Palata-lized	
Plosives	Oral vl				t	t^w	t^y	c	c^w	c^y	K	k^w	k^y	
	Oral vc	b	b^w	b^y	d									
	Pre-nasal	mb			nt nd	nt^w nd^w		nc nj		nc^y	ŋk ŋg	$ŋg^w$		
		mf			ns	ns^w								
	Nasal	m			n			n^y	nv^w		ŋ	$ŋ^w$		
Fricative	vl	f	f^w	f^y	s	s^w	s^y							h
	vc				z						gh			
Lateral					l	l^w								
Sonorant								y	y^w		w			

After this paradigmatic study, we discover that the kànswéynséy language has a total of sixty-two (62) phonemes divided into two main groups: the vocalic phonemes (vowels) made up of ten (10) sounds and the consonantic phonemes (consonants) made up of fifty-two (52) sounds. In the next chapter, we are going to deal with the syntagmatic analysis of this language.

PART TWO

SYNTAGMATIC ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 4

THE SYLLABLE

Dubois (1973) defines the syntagmatic link as any link existing between two or many units appearing in the speech. Up till now, we have been dealing only with the paradigmatic approach which has enable us to identify and define phonemes.

In this chapter, we shall study the combination of phonemes that exist in the kə̀nswéynséy language. To achieve this, we shall use the contrast principle, that is the succession of phonemes in words. In doing this, we are going to show how phonemes are combined to form words or syllables.

4.1. Definition

A syllable is a fundamental structure which is at the base when speech is produced. A phonetic definition of the syllable is given by BOUQUIAUX and THOMAS (1976: 30) as: "une unité articulatoire qui correspond à l'ensemble des sons réalisés en une seule émission de voix"; that is an articulatory unit corresponding to all the sounds, pronounced at once. WIESEMANN et al (1983: 57) give a phonological definition of the syllable as: "une unité de sequence de sons comprenant au moins un centre de syllabe qui en est le sommet ou le noyau". This means that a syllable is a sequence of sounds constituting a single unit and comprising at least a nucleus.

To study the general structure of the Kə̀nswéynséy language is to examine the number of syllables, the different types of syllables that are found in this language, and the distribution of the various phonemes in syllables and words. Like any other language, this language has words that have a fixed number of syllables at the metric level. The syllable in this language has many elements among which:

- a nucleus or the centre of the syllable which is always a vowel, the only tone bearer.
- A facultative element: the margin which precedes or follows the nucleus and which WIESEMANN et al (1983: 60) term: "pre-nucleus margin" and "post-nucleus margin". This language admits both open and closed syllables.

Examples:

Open Syllables	Closed Syllables
/wɪ /: "fire"	/njàŋ /: "axe"
/mbé/: "world"	/bâŋ /: "outside"
/cwà/: "war"	/ŋgéy/: "house"
/mbà/: "meat"	/ŋgə̀'/: "sufferance"
/cɔ̀/: "mouth"	/búŋ/: "stomach"

4.2. Types of Syllables in the kànswéynséy language

There are three (3) types of syllables in this language:

4.2.1. The Vc Syllable

It exists in this language only in one word:

/àŋ/: "yes"

4.2.2. The CV Syllable

This is the most frequent syllable structure in this language.

Examples:

/nyù/: "hair"

/yí/: "name"

/ntí/: "louse"

/cɔ̀/: "mouth"

/sǒ/: "fish"

/mbà/: "meat"

/kə̀/: "what"

4.2.3. The CVC Syllable

It is also frequent in this language.

Examples:

/lúŋ/: "room"

/ghàh/: "riches"

/kʉ́ŋ/: "crab"

/tɔ̀w/: "nervil"

/ŋkáh/: "wood"

/ʃʉ́ŋ/: "dirty"

/lɔ̀ŋ/: "expensive"

/njàŋ/: "axe"

CHAPTER 5

SYLLABLE COMBINATIONS

The kə̀nswéynséy language has many types of syllable combinations.

5.1. Monosyllables

Here, words are made up of just one syllable. The different types of mono-syllables found in this language are:

5.1.1. The VC Structure

Example:

/àŋ/: "yes"

5.1.2. The CV(C) Structure:

This type of syllable can be closed or open. That is, it can be CVC or CV.

Examples:

/mə̀/: "I, me"

/c^{w}á/: "war"

/k^{y}é/: "money"

/bŭŋ/: "cheap"

/ŋgéy/: "house"

/ndóh/: "thief"

/lúŋ/: "sweet"

5.2. Combinations in CV(C) Monosyllables

All the vowels of this language appear in v, in cv(c) syllables. Nevertheless, not all consonants go with all vowels. The following tables show the occurrences of vowels after consonants in CV(C). To each of the consonants attested at the initial position of CV(C) monosyllables, correspond a series of cross (horizontally), representing vowels' paradigm. The cross (+) stands for a possible combination.

5.2.1. Table of Combinations in CV(C) Monosyllables with C_1 Simple

V / C	i	e	ɛ	a	ʉ	æ	ɵ	o	ɔ	u
b	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
mb	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
mf	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	
m	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
f	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+
t		+	+	+	+	+	+		+	
nt	+			+	+	+		+	+	+
d	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	
nd	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
s	+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+
z		+						+		
l	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
c		+	+	+	+				+	+
j		+		+	+				+	
nc	+	+	+		+				+	+
ns		+	+			+				+
nj	+	+		+	+				+	
ny	+			+	+				+	+
y	+	+	+	+				+	+	
k				+			+	+		+
g		+	+		+		+	+	+	+
ŋk	+			+			+	+	+	+
ŋg		+		+			+	+	+	+
ŋ	+			+				+		+

gh				+		+			+	
h			+	+						+
w	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+

From this table, we see that all the simple consonants of this language appear at the initial position in CV(C) monosyllables; We also notice that some contexts of appearance are limited, as it is the case with: /y, nc, j, h/.

5.2.2. Table of Combinations in CV(C) Monosyllables with a labialised C_1

V / C	i	e	ɛ	a	ʉ	æ	ə	o	ɔ
b^w				+			+	+	+
t^w									+
t^w	+			+					
nt^w		+		+				+	
nd^w		+		+				+	
s^w	+	+	+					+	
l^w	+	+		+					
c^w		+	+	+				+	
j^w				+					
ny^w	+	+							
y^w				+				+	
k^w			+	+			+		
g^w			+					+	
$ŋg^w$			+	+			+		
$ŋ^w$	+	+	+						

We notice, following this table, that the high vowel /ʉ/ and the low vowel /æ/ never appear in front of labialised consonants.

Also, all the contexts of appearance here are limited.

5.2.3. Table of Combinations in CV(C) Monosyllables with a palatalised C_1

V / C	e	ɛ	a	æ	ə	o	ɔ	u	ʉ
b^y	+		+						
f^y	+	+	+						
g^y				+					
t^y	+								
s^y	+		+	+					
c^y	+								
nc^y		+		+					
k^y	+		+						

From this table, it can be seen that /ə, o, ɔ, u, ʉ/ never appear in front of palatalised consonants. /e/ appears in front of all palatalised consonants except in front of /nc^y/. Generally, the contexts of appearance here are limited.

5.3. Combinations in Disyllables

A disyllabic word is one made up of two (2) syllables. Its possible structures are the following:

5.3.1. The V-CV Structure

This structure is found in this language only in one word.

/à-kə́/: "father"

5.3.2. The CV-CV Structure

Examples:

/cʷê-wó/: "sunshine"

/kə̀-lí/: "tongue"

/sí-syə́/: "sixors"

/kí-ndwé/: "fly"

/màkʉ́/: "to know"

/mə̀-yɔ́/: "to hear"

/mə̀-gə̀/: "to go"

/mə̀-zó/: "to kill"

5.3.3. The CV-CVC Structure

Many words also have this structure.

Examples:

/fə̀-líh/: "smock"

/mí-ndów/: "blood"

/bə̀-túh/: "night"

/ndə̀-làh/: "sweet potato"

/kà-báŋ/: "fufu"

/mà-tɔ̀ŋ/: "to send"

/mà-ghuh/: "to swell"

/mà-wéy/: "to cane"

/mà-dʉ̀h/: "to show"

5.3.4. Table of Possible Disyllabic Combinations

Syll 1 \ Syll 2	V	cv	vc	cvc
v		+		
cv		+		+
vc				
cvc		+		+

The cross (+) shows a possible combination.

5.4. Combinations in Trisyllables

A trisyllable word is one made up of three (3) syllables. Few words have this structure in kànswéynséy.

5.4.1. The CV-CV-CV Structure

Examples:

/kà-ywí-hí/: "feather"

/mà-ká-lɛ̀/: "white man"

/cɛ̀-kɛ̀-lɛ̀/: "sieve"

/kə̀-mbɔ́-lɛ̂/: "tadpole"

/mə̀-sí-hí/: "to put down"

/mə̀-gí-tù/: "to add"

/mə̀-lǐ-hí/: "to tell"

/mə̀-ywí-sə̀/: "to respire"

5.4.2. The CV-CV-CVC Structure

In this language, only one (1) word obeys this structure.

/kú-mə́-káŋ/: "tortoise"

Nevertheless, there are many other words in this language which appear like trisyllables, but, when we analyse them well, we realise that they are compound words. So, we consider them as combinations of monosyllabic and disyllabic words or vice versa, or even, combinations of three (3) monosyllabic words.

As we have seen, the kànswéynséy language has three (3) syllable types: monosyllables, disyllables and trisyllables.

5.5. Interpretation Problem: Prefixation

During our data analysis, we discovered that many words have prefixes.

Example:

/kə̀-tɔ́/: "head"

/fə̀-nywé/:"cutlass"

/fə̀-ntáŋ/: "fruit"

/bə̀-tɔ́/: "heads"

/sé/: "eye"

/mə̀ -nywé/: "cutlasses"

/tə̀-sé/: "eyes"

Following these examples, we notice that there are six noun class markers in this language: kə̀, fə̀, tə̀, mə̀, bə̀ and ø. Among them kə̀, fə̀ and ø stand for the singular while bə̀, mə̀ and tə̀ mark the plural. We should note here that ø means zero prefix.

These noun class prefixes function as follows: nouns with kə̀ as singular prefix form their plural with bə̀, those with fə̀ form their plural with mə̀ and those with ø (zero) prefix form their plural with tə̀. The table below better explains this.

Singular Prefix \ Plural Prefix	bə̀	mə̀	tə̀
ø			+
kə̀	+		
fə̀		+	

The cross (+) shows the correspondence between the singular form and the plural form.

We also notice some prefixation with verbs.

Example:

/mə̀-nó/: "to drink"

/mə̀-méh/: "to throw"

/mə̀-gə̀ /: "to go"

/mə̀-yɔ́/: "to hear"

/mə̀-bàŋ/: "to hate"

From these words, we deduce that the prefix morpheme mə̀ marks the infinitive form in this language.

In the next lines, we shall study the distribution of vocalic and consonantic phonemes in the syllable. In doing this, we will try to see all the contexts of appearance of each phoneme.

5.6. Phoneme Distribution

Here we shall indicate the context of appearance of the attested phonemes in kə̀nswéynséy. There are certain distinctive sounds which occur only at word initial position, some at word medial position and others at word final position. There are others which appear in all these positions.

All the consonant phonemes of this language appear word initially and medially. Only four of them: /h/, /y/, /ŋ/ and /w/ appear word finally.

Concerning vowel phonemes, all of them appear word, finally and medially. /a/ is the only vowel phoneme that appears word initially.

The following tables better portray the phonemes and their positions.

5.6.1. Table of the Various Systemsof Appearance of Vowels

Vowel Phonemes	System at the initial position	System at the medial position	System at the final position
i		+	+
e		+	+
a	+	+	+
ʉ		+	+
ə		+	+
u		+	+
o		+	+

ɔ		+	+
æ		+	+

5.6.2. Table of the Various Systems of Appearance of Consonants

Consonant Phonemes	System at the initial	System at the middle	System at the final
b	+	+	
b^w	+	+	
b^y	+	+	
mb	+	+	
mf	+	+	
m	+	+	
f	+	+	
f^w	+	+	
f^y	+	+	
t	+	+	
t^w	+	+	
t^y	+	+	
d	+	+	
nt	+	+	
nd	+	+	
nd^w	+	+	
ns	+	+	
ns^w	+	+	
n	+	+	
s	+	+	
s^w	+	+	
s^y	+	+	

z	+	+	
l	+	+	
l^w	+	+	
c	+	+	
c^w	+	+	
c^y	+	+	
j	+	+	
j^w	+	+	
nc	+	+	
nc^y	+	+	
nj	+	+	
n^y	+	+	
ny^w	+	+	
y	+	+	+
y^w	+	+	
k	+	+	
k^w	+	+	
k^y	+	+	
g	+	+	
g^w	+	+	
ŋk	+	+	
ŋg	+	+	
$ŋg^w$	+	+	
ŋ	+	+	+
$ŋ^w$	+	+	
gh	+	+	
h	+	+	+
w	+	+	+

From this table, we realise that all consonants appear word initially and medially while only /y, ŋ, h, w/ appear word finally.

CHAPTER 6

TONE DISTRIBUTION

In this chapter, we are going to study various structures of tonemes in polysyllabic words.

6.1. Dissylabic Words

The following structures are possible in disyllabic kə̀nswéynséy words:

6.1.1. The H-H Structure

Examples:

/mí-ndów/: "blood"

/kí-cáh/: "soil"

/cɛ́-tɔ̀/: "throat"

/cə́-ŋí/: "armpit"

/lɔ̀-sú/: "blue"

6.1.2. The L-H Structure

Examples:

/à-kə́/: "father"

/kì-bí/: "dust"

/fə̀-nyúŋ/: "bird"

/fə̀-líh/: "smoke"

/bə̀-túh/: "night"

6.1.3. The L-L Structure

Examples:

/ndà-làh/: "sweet potato"

/ŋgwà-làh/: "okro"

/kə̀-njʉ̀ŋ/: "back"

/mə̀-tɔ̀h/: "to walk"

/kə̀-ŋàŋ/: "scorpion"

6.1.4. The H-L Structure

Examples:

/ntwó-làŋ/: "blacksmith"

/ywó-ŋkɔ̀h/: "evening"

/báŋ-mɛ̀/: "nape"

/yɔ̀-mù/: "plum"

6.1.5. The L-HL Structure

Examples:

/kə̀-wâ/: "wing"

/fə̀-ŋgwɛ̂/: "salt"

/kə̀-ŋgê/: "rip"

/fə̀-ɲjêy/: "star"

6.1.6. The L-LH Structure

Examples:

/ndɛ̀-lwɛ̌/: "bile"

/mbʉ̀-ŋjʉ̌/: "body"

6.2. Trisyllabic Words

The following structures are possible in kànswéynséy trisyllabic words.

6.2.1. The H-H-H Structure

Example:

/kú-má-káŋ/: "tortoise"

6.2.2. The L-H-H Structure

Examples:

/kà-kwé-hé/: "knee"

/kà-ywí-hí/: "sweat"

/kà-njú-ŋkɛ́/: "round"

/mà-ntó-lé/: "hernia"

/mà-nsɛ́-lɛ́/: "lightening"

6.2.3. The L-H-L Structure

Examples:

/kà-bó-cɛ̀/: "wood ash"

/fà-ntá-ŋkà/: "fruit"

/kà-nó-gɔ̀/: "mistake"

6.2.4. The L-L-L Structure

Examples:

/mà-fì-hì/: "to tell"

/mà-ywì-nà/: "to shout"

/mà-zɔ̀-tà/: "to get cold"

6.2.5. The L-H-HL Structure

/kə̀-ʃwɔ́-gâ/: "grass"

/kə̀-tɔ́-ŋgêy/: "roof"

/kə̀-dú-hûŋ/: "hier"

6.2.6. The L-HL-H Structure

Example:

/kə̀-ʃwâ-yì/: "food"

From this tone distribution, we realise that contour tones are less frequent be it in disyllables or in trisyllables.

During our analysis here, we noticed a down-drift phenomenon. We talk of down-drift when in a succession of tones in a polysyllabic word, a low or a high tone following another low or high tone becomes lower than the first low or high tone.

Example 1: mə̀ – fī – hí "to tell"

1) -

2) -

3) -

a b c

In this example with three (3) low tones, tone c is a bit lower than tone b which is itself a bit lower than tone a.

Example 2: kú - mə́ - káŋ : "tortoise"

1) -

2) -

3) -

a b c

In this second example, high tone b is lower than high tone a, high tone c is lower than high tone b.

We have arrived here at the end of our syntagmatic analysis in which we defined the kènswéynséy syllable and brought out all its possible structures.

This done, we shall pass to the final step of our work: standardisation perspectives.

PART THREE

STANDARDISATION PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER 7

PRELIMINARIES

7.0. Steps of an Initial and Basic Standardisation of a Language

According to WIESEMANN et al (1983: 129), standardisation deals with the development of written norms of a language. In other words, standardisation is the entire process that permits us to move a language from its oral stage to a written stage and to diffuse it through vulgarisation channels like grammars, spelling-books, dictionaries, etc. There are four (4) main steps in a standardisation process. These are: selection (the choice of the reference dialect), codification (the writing of the standard form), elaboration (the publication of written materials) and acceptance (the public's opinion about the standardisation of the language).

As we earlier said in our introduction, due to some methodology constraints, we cannot go deeply into the standardisation of kànswéynséy in a single work like this. We are simply opening tracks to further works. So having examined the sound system of this language, we are now going to study some preliminary points we find necessary for the standardisation of this language. In further research, we are going to bring more to continue the standardisation process of this language.

7.1. Dialect or Variant Problems

7.1.1. Dialect Situation

There are fourteen (14) quarters which make up Nsey village and the approximate population of its speakers is 14.000 in the 1987 government census. A group we interviewed reported that all kànswéynséy speakers in all these quarters speak in exactly the same way and that there are no problems of comprehension between any of the quarters. Those interviewed said there is no quarter where the best kànswéynséy is spoken. They said all speak the same.

This is a strong indication that the dialect situation in Nsey is homogenous.

7.1.2. Multilingualism

Most of those interviewed, both in a group situation and individually, reported that they did not understand any of the related languages unless they had considerable contacts with speakers from these areas. These related languages are Bamungo, Bamunka and Babessi. This suggests that comprehension, when it does occur, is acquired and not inherent.

a) Babessi

We interviewed a group of ten (10) people on whether they understand Babessi or not. They told us that it was not easy for them to really get what a Babessi speaker says. However, four (4) people out of the ten (10) kànswéynséy speakers confirmed that only aged Nsey people would understand Babessi when spoken at a slower speed than usual.

Some of these people said nsey youths would not speak or understand Babessi except they were born and bred in Babessi.

Four (4) interviewers out of the ten (10) said in order to converse effectively with a Babessi speaker, they would rather use Pidgin English.

These varied points of view show clearly that kànswéynséy and Babessi are not variants of the same language.

b) Babungo

Out of these three (3) ring group languages related to kànswéynséy, Babungo appears to be the most nearest to it. We interviewed a group of ten (10) kànswéynséy speakers on how similar were Babungo and kànswéy nséy. Five (5) people told us that they don't understand Babungo at all. Three (3) people confirmed that if a Babungo speaker speaks slowly to them, they might understand him. But if they have to reply, they would do so in kànswéynséy at a slow speed also. Two (2) people said

only elder Nsey people will understand and try to speak Babungo due to the fact that they often go to Babungo for trading and as years go by, they capture the language bit by bit.

These varied points of view once more, make us to believe that Babungo and kànswéynséy are two different languages.

c) Bamunka

According to a group interviewed in Nsey village, the language spoken in Bamunka is quite different from that spoken in Nsey. They said many kànswéynséy speakers understand Bamunka because they go there for trading and schooling.

In individual questionnaires however, the response to whether they understand Bamunka or not was not so clear. Out of ten (10) individuals interviewed, four (4) claimed that they would speak kànswéynséy to a Bamunka speaker who will then reply in Bamunka. Both speakers would have to speak more slowly than normal. Four (4) people out of ten (10) said they would use Pidgin English with Bamunka speakers.

Thus, it is not clear from the mixed responses of the small number of kànswéynséy speakers interviewed that the majority of the kànswéynséy speaking community understands Bamunka.

At the end of the interviews on each language, we asked our interviewers which language among Babessi, Bamungo, Bamunka and kànswéynséy was going to be used during an important meeting involving all the speakers of these languages. They told us that none of the languages will be used. That only English or Pidgin English would be used during such an occasion.

We took twelve (12) lexical items at random to show how similar or different were these four languages of the ring group. We are going to put them in the chart below:

Items	Bamunka	Babungo	Babessi	Kànswéynséy
1. wind	wónə̀	ʊ́álə̀	bôtə	kəwâ
2. tree	t-f́kə̀	thé	ts+kə	kətí
3. firewood	ŋkóhmə́	ŋkʊ̌h	ŋkám	ŋkáh
4. sing	lúlú	yàú	yô	ywó
5. goat	bî	b-f́náú	vàmɛ̀	bé
6. give	kò	kó	kə̀'	kwə́
7. water	múh	múú	ndzó	mó
8. child	vám	wè	vɛ̌m	wăŋ
9. fire	víhí	wí	víɛ	wí
10. intestine	njímə̀	màntó	ntə́mə́	kàtwà
11. tongue	lɛ́hɛ̀kə́	nd-f́tə̀	ndwósəkə̀	kàlí
12. mouth	cú	shú	cú	cɔ̂

Following this chart, we realise that these languages are quite different. In fact, out of our twelve (12) words, only one (1) "mouth" appears a bit similar in all the languages.

In general, it may be concluded that kànswéynséy speakers do not have inherent comprehension of any other language, but that their understanding of other languages is acquired through contact. Babessi, Bamunka, Babungo and Nsey villages are situated along the same road which links the town of Bamenda with the Ndop Plain, thus facilitating the frequent contact between them and the exchange of market activities. However there may be some linguistic proximity of these neighbouring speech forms to kànswéynséy so that learning them may be fairly easy, once contact is made and continued.

7.2. Language of Wider Communication

Pidgin English is the language of wider communication for the villages in the Ndop Plain area. It is used by kànswéynséy speakers where there is inadequate understanding of a second language. Pidgin English is also used by children under the age of fifteen (15), who have not yet had sufficient contact with speakers of a neighbouring second language to understand it.

7.3. Language Vitality and Viability

7.3.1. Language Use Within the Community

The mother tongue is always used in all domestic domains and by all age groups, within the home and within the local community. The exception to this pattern occurs when kànswéynséy speakers encounter non-mother tongue speakers, or when the head of the household is not a mother tongue speaker.

Kànswéynséy is used between mother tongue speakers in the local market and in the main market of Ndop town. Pidgin is used with speakers of other languages in these contexts.

7.3.2. Church Use of the Mother Tongue in the Nsey Community

a) Presbyterian Church

In the three (3) Presbyterian churches found in Nsey village, approximately half of the congregation members are kànswéynséy speakers and the others are from neighbouring language groups. The services are conducted in English with Bible readings interpreted from English into Pidgin English. Not everyone however, understands Pidgin English or English, particularly the older members of the congregation.

Songs and hymns are sung in English, Mungaka (the former North-West official Church language) and some in kànswéynséy. Announcements are usually

made in Pidgin English and interpreted into kànswéynséy. Usually the Pastor is not a kànswéynséy speaker. As yet, there are no written materials in this language for church use.

b) Roman Catholic Church

In the two (2) Roman Catholic churches found in Nsey, the entire service is conducted in Pidgin English, including the liturgy and the lectionary Bible readings. Announcements are made in Pidgin English because not all the people in the congregation understand kànswéynséy.

7.3.3. Attitudes Towards the Development of the kànswéynséy Language

Overall, attitudes seem to be positive to the development of kànswéynséy as a standardised language.

Most of those interviewed in a group situation and individually indicated that they would like their own children to be taught how to read and write in kànswéynséy. There was generally a hesitation expressed to using written materials in any other language than kànswéynséy.

7.3.4. Language Maintenance and Shift

It seems likely, from the information obtained, that the speech form known as kànswéynséy is not in any immediate danger of dying out or of being replaced by other languages or speech forms.

7.3.4.1. Marriage and Migration Patterns

Women from Nsey tend to marry outside the area, although usually not from too far distance and probably from the Ndop Plain. Although women often leave the

language area in order to get married, Nsey men eventually set up their homes in Nsey and do not move away permanently from the language area.

Kànswéynséy speakers who have received a good level of education usually move away to look for employment in the bigger towns and cities. These include professional workers and civil servants. Most of them return at retirement age, and build their house in their home village. However, because of financial constraints and the current economic situation, many of those who have worked for some time in other cities and towns return to the Nsey area before retirement age. This means that there is a fairly stable community of kànswéynséy speakers at all times, who speak their mother tongue.

7.3.4.2. Education

There are five (5) primary schools, two (2) secondary schools among which a technical and a general in the Nsey area. After obtaining their ordinary level or C.A.P., those who feel the need to further their studies go to Bamunka (Ndop).

The language of instruction in these schools is English. Although Nsey children begin to speak Pidgin English when attending school, this is only to enable them to communicate with non-kànswéynséy speakers.

According to both groups interviewed, there is no encroachment on to the use of the mother tongue by either Pidgin English or by another language. Although several of the surrounding languages are known by kànswéynséy speakers in different quarters, these are mostly respective neighbouring groups. None of the neighbouring languages is as yet spoken sufficiently well by any large section of the community as to constitute a threat to the vitality of kànswéynséy.

Those interviewed both in a group situation and individually said that they felt that kànswéynséy would still be spoken in the future, in the same way as it is now.

7.3.4.3. Socio-economic Factors

Culturally, the kànswéynséy speaking community seems to be homogenous. This is also apparent linguistically. Economically, the fourteen (14) different quarters of Nsey village are linked by a single market day [ŋgáŋ] which comes up after every eight (8) days.

There is no quarter of Nsey which is cut off during rainy season and all quarters are reachable by foot, which means that the language area is geographically homogenous.

There is an active development committee in the area, previous projects of which include the construction of a health centre, and currently involved in the provision of piped-borne water to the village.

Findings from two (2) informal group interviews and ten (10) individual questionnaires indicate that kànswéynséy speakers all speak the same speech form, with no apparent difference of pronunciation. The main language of wider communication is Pidgin English which is used whenever kànswéynséy cannot be understood. Comprehension and use of neighbouring languages are limited to those who have had considerable exposure to them, and are also limited to those parts of the village which border with these neighbouring speech forms.

Use of kànswéynséy for religious purposes demonstrates that there is a perceived need to translate or to interpret into the kànswéynséy language for adequate communication to take place.

Attitudes to the development of the kànswéynséy language are positive. It seems from the information gathered that this speech form has probable needs for standardisation and language development.

This said, we shall now propose an alphabet and some orthographic principles of the kànswéynséy language so that things should not be done at random.

CHAPTER 8

ALPHABET AND ORTHOGRAPHIC PRINCIPLES

Having attested the distinctive consonantal and vocalic sounds of the kə̀nswéynséy language, we find it necessary to contribute to the development and the standardisation of this language which is our main aim as we said in our introduction to this work. To achieve this, we will propose a writing system comprising an alphabet that is the graphic representation of all the phonemes found in this language and orthographic principles or rules.

8.1. The Alphabet of Kə̀nswéynséy

As we earlier said, an alphabet is the graphic representation of individual sounds of a given language. Graphemes will be taken from the General Alphabet of Cameroonian languages (GACL).

With respect to our phonological analysis, we propose the following alphabet: a, æ, b, b^w, b^y, c, c^w, c^y, d, e, ɛ, ə, f, f^w, f^y, g, g^w, g^y, gh, h, i, j, j^w, k, k^w, k^y, l, l^w, m, mb, mf, n, nc, nc^y, nd, nd^w, nj, ns, ns^w, nt, nt^w, ny, ny^w, ŋ, $ŋ^w$, ŋg, $ŋg^w$, ŋk, o, ɔ, s, s^w, s^y, t, t^w, t^y, u, ʉ, w, y, y^w, z.

The table below shows the symbols used, their counterparts, proposed graphemes and illustrative words:

Symbol Used		Proposed Grapheme	Illustration	Gloss
/a/	[a]	"a"	"àkə́"	"father"
/æ/	[æ]	"æ"	"bæ̀"	"red, ripe"
/b/	[b]	"b"	"bèlɛ́y"	"groundnut"
/b^w/	[bw]	"bw"	"məbwə́"	"peace"
/b^y/	[by]	"by"	"byá"	"pear"
/c/	[c]	"c"	"cɔ̂"	"mouth"
/c^w/	[cw]	"cw"	"cwà"	"war"

/cʸ/	[cy]	"cy"	"cyɛ́"	"many"
/d/	[d]	"d"	"dúŋ"	"play"
/e/	[e]	"e"	"lwé"	"nose"
/ɛ/	[ɛ]	"ɛ"	"ncɛ́"	"mother"
/ə/	[ə]	"ə"	"kəfwə̂"	"wind"
/f/	[f]	"f"	"fàh"	"work"
/fʷ/	[fw]	"fw"	"kəfwɔ́"	"drug"
/fʸ/	[fy]	"fy"	"fyə̀"	"rat"
/g/	[g]	"g"	"gò"	"fall"
/gʷ/	[gw]	"gw"	"gwàgwà"	"duck"
/gʸ/	[gy]	"gy"	"gyɛ́"	"leaf"
/gh/	[gh]	"gh"	"ghán"	"riches"
/h/	[h]	"h"	"háŋ"	"him"
/i/	[i]	"i"	"fəlíh"	"smoke"
/j/	[j]	"j"	"jě"	"road"
/jʷ/	[jw]	"jw"	"jwàh"	"splide"
/k/	[k]	"k"	"kúməkáŋ"	"tortoise"
/kʷ/	[kw]	"kw"	"kwə̂ŋ"	"hill"
/kʸ/	[ky]	"ky"	"kyé"	"money"
/l/	[l]	"l"	"lɔ́ŋ"	"husband"
/lʷ/	[lw]	"lw"	"fəlwílwí"	"yellow yam"
/m/	[m]	"m"	"mé"	"neck"
/mb/	[mb]	"mb"	"mbŭŋ"	"grain"
/mf/	[fm]	"mf"	"mféy"	"bicycle"
/n/	[n]	"n"	"nŭŋ"	"sleep"
/nc/	[nc]	"nc"	"ncə̀ŋ"	"all"

/nc^{y}/	[ncy]	"ncy"	"ncyɛ̌"	"sky"
/nd/	[nd]	"nd"	"ndàlàh"	"sweet potato"
/nd^{w}/	[ndw]	"ndw"	"ndwé"	"cloth"
/nj/	[nj]	"nj"	"njɔ̀"	"thorn"
/ns/	[ns]	"ns"	"nsʉ̂"	"jar"
/ns^{w}/	[nsw]	"nsw"	"kə̀nswà"	"vegetable"
/nt/	[nt]	"nt"	"ntáŋ"	"fruit"
/nt^{w}/	[ntw]	"ntw"	"ntwôlàng"	"blacksmith"
/ny/	[ny]	"ny"	"nyû"	"hair"
/ny^{w}/	[nyw]	"nyw"	"nywé"	"knife"
/ŋ/	[ŋ]	"ŋ"	"ŋó"	"body"
/ŋ^{w}/	[ŋw]	"ŋw"	"ŋwàh"	"bright"
/ŋg/	[ŋg]	"ŋg"	"ŋgɛ́y"	"house"
/ŋg^{w}/	[ŋgw]	"ŋgw"	"ŋgwəsǽ"	"corn"
/ŋk/	[ŋk]	"ŋk"	"ŋkʉ̌"	"rope"
/o/	[o]	"o"	"kə̀tó"	"ear"
/ɔ/	[ɔ]	"ɔ"	"yɔ̀nʉ́yɔ̀nʉ́"	"bee"
/s/	[s]	"s"	"sáh"	"dispute"
/s^{w}/	[sw]	"sw"	"kíswé"	"sand"
/s^{y}/	[sy]	"sy"	"syæ̀"	"comb"
/t/	[t]	"t"	"táŋ"	"five"
/t^{w}/	[tw]	"tw"	"twà"	"burst"
/t^{y}/	[ty]	"ty"	"tyé"	"three"
/u/	[u]	"u"	"búŋ"	"stomach"
/ʉ/	[ʉ]	"ʉ"	"gʉ̀"	"voice"
/w/	[w]	"w"	"wéy"	"market"

/y/	[y]	"y"	"yó"	"honey"
/y^{w}/	[yw]	"yw"	"ywà"	"snake"
/z/	[z]	"z"	"zé"	"eat"

8.2. Orthographic Principles

WIESEMANN. et al, (1983: 149) define orthography as the rules that govern the way letters of the alphabet of a given language are used in order to write and read it correctly. Below are some reading and writing principles necessary for writing and speaking the kànswéynséy language.

8.2.1. Consonant Principles

- The glides w and y mark labialisation and palatalisation respectively of the consonants they follow. Thus, a labialised or a palatalised consonant has a monophonematic status.
- The Nc, Ncw, Ncy structures, standing respectively for a pre-nasalised, a labialised and palatalised sounds have a monophonematic status.
- The phoneme /h/ is pronounced ['] at word final position and [h] anywhere else.
- The phonemes /zh/ and /zhw/ can be interchangeable with /y/ and /yw/ respectively, orally, but in the written form, only /y/ and /yw/ would be used.

8.2.2. Vowel Principles

The v.v. sequence is not admitted in the kànswéynséy language. We shall therefore use a v.v. sequence for a contour tone. In this case, only the low tone will be marked on one of the vowels.

Example: wǎŋ ⟶ wàaŋ

8.2.3. Tone Principles

- Contour tones are full tonemes. Only grammatical contour tones will be marked. For lexical contour tones, the vowel shall be doubled and one of these vowels shall carry a low tone. So, a H.L. or a L.H. tone will be as follows:

  â ⟶ aà and ǎ ⟶ àa

- Only the Low tone will be marked because it is the less frequent.

8.2.4. Orthographic Principles for Words in Sentences or Phrases

According to Pike (1974) words or morphemes can be considered separate words if the two can be separated by a word. For this,

- A singular or a plural morpheme together with the noun it determines, constitute a single word because another word cannot be placed between them.
- The infinitive marker plus the verb constitute a word because they cannot be separated by another word.
- A verb-tense-marker will be considered as a full word. So, the verb and the tense marker are two different words.
- In a compound-word, words will be separated by a hyphen.
- Names of persons and places will start with a capital letter.

8.2.5. Punctuation Principles

- A sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.
- Quotations and indirect speeches will be put in quotation marks.
- The comma will be used to mark a pause in a sentence.
- Orthographic transcriptions will be put in quotation marks.
- A question ends with a question mark.

The above established principles will be applied in a text we are going to present later on, in the annex.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Throughout this work, we have been trying to move the kànswéynséy language from its oral state to a written one. This required an examination of the properties and qualities of the sounds that speakers internalise in order to communicate effectively, some standardisation perspectives and some orthographic rules that govern this language.

After exploring historical, geographical and socio-economic perspectives, we studied the linguistic situation of kànswéynséy.

The first part which is made up of three chapters, deals with the paradigmatic analysis of the language. In chapter 1, we made an inventory of the tones that exist in the kànswéynséy language. We identified four tonemes among which are two level tones and two contour tones. In chapter 2, phonemic analysis of vocalic sounds was carried out after a phonetic inventory of those sounds was made. through minimal pairs, we realised that all the ten (10) vowels we found in our phonetic inventory were phonemes. In chapter 3, after having got fifty-five (55) consonantic sounds in the phonetic inventory, we examined them through a phonemic analysis and finally came out with fifty-two (52) consonantic phonemes. This is because [h]/['], [zh], [y] and [zhw]/[y^{w}] were identified as variants of the phonemes /h/, /y/ and /y^{w}/ respectively.

The second part, made up of three chapters, deals with syntagmatic analysis. In chapter 4, we studied the kànswéynséy syllable structure and found three types: the vc, cv and cvc structures. In chapter 5, we examined syllable combinations in this language. It was realised that words in this language do not exceed three syllables except they are compound words. Chapter 6 was about tone distribution. Here tonemes' structures were also examined in polysyllabic words.

The last part of this work, part three, throws some light on the standardisation process of the kànswéynséy language and is made up of two chapters. In chapter 7, we tried to explain why we think this language can or should be standardised. To achieve this, we passed through some sociolinguistic and demographic criteria which revealed that there was a need for this language to be standardised. We compared

kànswéynséy to its neighbouring languages, studied its use in the society, asked the public's opinion about its standardisation. In chapter 8, the last but not the least chapter, we brought out the alphabet of this language and some orthographic principles that should govern it. Altogether, the kànswéynséy alphabet is made up of sixty-two (62) letters among which fifty-two (52) consonants and ten (10) vowels.

In spite of its scientific nature, this work does not explore all the phonological features and processes, nor does it go through all the stages of the standardisation process of a language. The inability to do this derived from difficulties posed by methodology and other spatio-temporal constraints. Therefore, further research would enrich both the distinctive system of segments and the written literature of the language. In fact, generative and autosegmental phonology would reveal much. Also, the elaboration of dictionaries, grammar books, spelling-books and much more is very imperative for the standardisation of this language. Further research is also very necessary in the domain of English loan words and their phonological adaptation. This would reveal some of the phonological processes that account for deviations in the speech of some kànswéynséy speakers of English.

It is hoped that this study would reveal the sound system of kànswéynséy and help teachers of English faced wit the problem of interference and transfer. For example, it can be noticed that the absence of the [p] and [r] sounds in kànswéynséy leads to their substitution with [b] as in [ban] and [l] as in [lice] for "pan" and "rice", respectively.

Finally, we will like to note here that, kànswéynséy, like many other languages, is very rich and researchers could do a lot of works on it.

We hope that this project has added to the research in linguistic sciences in general and in kànswéynséy in particular. However, we cannot say that this work is exhaustive. As such, loopholes in it can be used as bases for further linguistic research.

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ANNEX

A. ILLUSTRATIVE TEXT

Below is an illustrative text to show the alphabet graphemes and the orthographic principles. The text is a story presented in three (3) lines. The first line is the phonemic transcription, the second line is the orthographic transcription and the third line the literal translation. A free or literary translation of the whole story will be given after this.

/yɛ́'	kə̀	kə̀bʉ́	nà	cú,	sà'ŋguŋguŋ	nà	bontǎ/	
"Yɛh	kə̀	kə̀bʉ	nà	cu,	sàh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ	nà	bontàa"	
Time	that	rainy seaon	past	arrive,	spider	past	lazy	

/màswó	bə̀fwá	gʉ́tə̀	kə̀bʉ̀	bʉ́	tʉ́ŋ	kə̀cə́/	
"màswo	bə̀fwa	gʉtə̀	kə̀bʉ	bʉ	tʉŋ	kə̀cə".	
To plant	things	like	other	people	in	village.	

/léy	ù	nà	bʉ̀sʉ̀	yɛ́'	bə̀ncé	ncʉ̀ŋ	bɛ́ŋ	sá	kə̀tʉ́/
"Ley	ù	nà	bʉ̀sʉ̀	yɛh	bəncɛ	ncʉ̀ŋ	bɛŋ	sa	kə̀tʉ".
Instead	he	past	spend	time	days	all	sleep	under	tree.

/bə̀ncé	ncʉ̀ŋ	zô	háŋ	bí	nɛ̀	háŋ	lɛ̀	ù	yɛ́	ntáŋ/
"Bə̀nce	ncʉ̀ŋ	zoò	haŋ	bi	nɛ̀	haŋ	lɛ̀	ù	yɛ	ntaŋ"
Days	all	wife	his	ask	to	him	that	he	future	start

/fà' tʉ́ŋ ghɔ̀w yɛ́' kà/

"fàh tʉŋ ghɔ̀w yɛh kà"

work in farm time when.

/ù là' nà háŋ lɛ̀: "ŋkɔ̂'fwà mà yɛ̀ ntáŋ fà'/

"Ù làh nà haŋ lɛ̀: "ŋkɔɔ̀h-fwà mà yɛ̀ ntaŋ fàh".

He tell to him that: "tomorrow I future start work.

/ù nà làsà kàncé kàmɔ̀' fí' nɛ̀ zô háŋ lɛ̀ ù gà/

"Ù nà làsà kànce kàmɔ̀h fíh nɛ̀ zoò haŋ lɛ̀ ù gà"

He past finally day one tell to wife his that she go

/wéy gà yúŋ kàmbà bɛ̀lɛ́y kyǽ/

"wey gà yuŋ kàmbà bɛ̀lɛy kyæ".

market go buy bag groundnuts fried.

/kànó nà kwà ŋgà' nɛ̀ zô háŋ/

"Kàno nà kwà ŋgàh nɛ̀ zoò haŋ"

Problem past give trouble to wife his,

/lɛ̀ wà kʉ́ bɛ̀lɛ́y kyǽ màswó/

"lɛ̀ wà kʉ bɛ̀lɛy kyæ màswo"

that he want groundnuts fried to plant.

/léy tɛ̀kə̀ ù swó, sə̀'ŋgúŋgúŋ nà lɛ́/

"Ley tɛ̀kə̀ ù swo, səh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ nà lɛ"

Instead of him plant, spider past take

/bɛ̀lɛ́y há gə̀ nɔ́' nsɛ́ kú nă ncʉ̀ŋ/

"bɛlɛy ha gə̀ nɔh nsɛ ku nàa ncʉ̀ŋ"

groundnuts those go sit down eat them all.

/fə̀dí' yɛ' kə̀bʉ̀ bú bá nà líntə̀ ghɔ̀w/

"Fə̀dih yɛh, kə̀bʉ̀ bʉ ba nà lintə̀ ghɔ̀w"

Small time, other people who past cultivate farm

/lʉ́ŋ kə̀cə́ nà kú bə̀fwá yíŋ/

"lʉŋ kə̀cə nà kʉ bə̀fwa yiŋ"

in village past harvest things their.

/zɔ̀ sə̀'ŋgúŋgúŋ bí nɛ̀ háŋ bútə̀ wúŋ bɛ̀lɛ́y/

"Zɔ̀ɔ̀ səh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ bi nɛ̀ haŋ butə̀ wuŋ bɛ̀lɛy"

Wife spider ask to him about their groundnuts.

/lə̀ nà kú' kə̀ncé kə̀mɔ̀' sə̀'ŋgúŋgúŋ/

"Tə̀ nà kuh kə̀nce kə̀mɔ̀h, səh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ"

Then past reach day one, spider

/nà kwɛ̀ nə̀ kə̀mbwà cʉ́ bɛ̀lɛ́y/

"nà kwɛ̀ nə̀ kə̀mbwà cʉ bɛ̀lɛy".

Past come back with bag full groundnuts.

/ù nà kʉ́ lɛ̀ sà'ŋgúŋgúŋ bɛ̌ŋ bɛ̀lɛ́y/

"Ù nà kʉ lɛ̀ sàh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ bɛ̀ɛŋ bɛ̀lɛy"

She past know that spider steal groundnuts

/há fə̀ tʉ́ŋ ghɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ béy/

"ha fə̀ tʉŋ ghɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ bey"

those from in farm person near negation.

/tɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ há nà nyɔ̀'/

"Tɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ ha nà nyɔ̀h"

Throat person near that past pain.

/ù nà kwà' tə̀ jɛ̌ yɛ̀ ndó' há/

"Ù nà kwàh tə̀ jèe yɛ̀ ndoh ha"

He past think of way catch thief that.

/ù nà nyítə̀ yɛ̀ nə̀ bə̀fwɔ̂ nà' tʉ́ tʉ́ŋ ghɔ̀w háŋ/

"Ù nà nyitə̀ yɛ̀ nə̀ bə̀fwɔɔ̀ nàh tʉ tʉŋ ghɔ̀w haŋ".

He past arrange person with leaves and stand in farm his.

/ù nà cítə̀ yɛ̀ bəfwɔ̂ há nə̀ fə̀dɔ̀ŋ/

"Ù nà citə̀ yɛ̀ bəfwɔɔ̀ ha nə̀ fə̀dɔ̀ŋ".

He past cover person leaves that with sticky gum.

/nâ mə̀kó' bə̀tú' sə̀'ŋgúŋgúŋ nà mə̀bɛ̂ŋ/

"Naà mə̀koh bə̀tuh,sə̀h-ŋgu-ŋguŋ nà mə̀bɛɛ̀ŋ"

When to reach night, spider past to steal

/bɛ̀lɛ́y fə̀ tʉ́ŋ ghɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ nyà/

"bɛ̀lɛy fə̀ tʉŋ ghɔ̀w yɛ̀ njʉ̀ nyà"

groundnuts from in farm person near him.

/ù nà gùtə̀ yéy yɛ̀ bàŋ háŋ/

"Ù nà gùtə yey yɛ̀ bàaŋ haŋ".

He past suddenly see person behind him.

/sə̀'ŋgúŋgúŋ nə̀ fáŋ nà' mù cə́ yɛ̀ há/

"Sə̀h-ŋgu-ŋguŋ nə̀ faŋ nàh mù cə yɛ̀ ha".

Spider to be afraid and try kick person this.

/fə̀dɔ̀ŋ fà nà dɔ́ŋ háŋ nə̀ yɛ̀ bəfwɔ̂ bá/

"Fə̀dɔ̀ŋ fà nà dɔŋ haŋ nə̀ yɛ̀ bəfwɔɔ̀ ba"

Sticky gum that past stick him with person leaves that

/nâ	màkó'	ŋkô'fwà	kàcá	ncʉ̀ŋ	nà/
"Naà	màkoh	ŋkɔɔ̀h-fwà	kàcə	ncʉ̀ŋ	nà"
When	to reach	morning	village	all	past

/yéy	ndó'	há	ù	tú	tʉ́ŋ	ghɔ̀w/
"yey	ndoh	ha	ù	tʉ	tʉŋ	ghɔ̀w".
see	thief	the	he	stand	in	farm.

/kàtɔ́	sà'ŋgúŋgúŋ	nà	dí	cà	ghà'/
"Kàtɔ	sàh-ŋgu-ŋguŋ	nà	di	cà	ghàh".
Head	spider	past	heavy	too	much.

/táŋ	fə̀	kàncé	há	wə̀	lítà	tʉ́ŋ	bɔ̀/
"Taŋ	fə̀	kànce	ha	wə̀	litə̀	tʉŋ	bɔ̀".
Since	from	day	that	he	hide	in	corners.

Literary Translation

Why the Spider Hides in Corners

When the rainyseason arrived, the spider was too lazy to plant crops like everyone else in the village. Instead, he spent all days, sleeping under a tree. Everyday his wife asked him when he was going to start work in the fields but he always answered: "tomorrow I will start work".

Finally, one day he told his wife to go to the market and buy a bag of roasted groundnuts. His wife was very worried that he wanted roasted groundnuts for planting. But instead of planting them, the spider simply took the groundnuts to the fields and sat down and ate them.

Soon the other farmers in the village were harvesting their crops and the spider's wife asked him about their groundnuts. One day the spider returned home with a bag full of groundnuts. His wife did not know that the spider had stolen them from a neighbour's farm. The neighbour was angry and thought of a way to catch the thief. So, he made a man out of leaves and put this leaf-man in his field. Then he covered this man with a sticky gum.

The next night, as the spider was stealing more groundnuts from his neighbour's field, he suddenly saw a man behind him. The spider was afraid and he tried to kick the leaf-man. As he kicked the man, he became completely stuck to him. The following morning, the whole village saw the thief stuck in the middle of the field. The spider was so ashamed that since that day he has always hidden in corners.

B. LEXIS

In this section, we shall bring out a small word-list kənswéynsέy/English. We shall consider only the orthographic transcription.

a/A: ãkə́: father àŋ: yes	
b/B bàaŋ: behind baŋ: nail baàŋ: we, us bànjuŋ: Junior brother or sister bæ: red be: goat beè: kolanut benjì: he-goat bèey: life bey: you (plural) bèy: not (negation) bɛ̀ɛ: ripe bɛ̀lɛy: groundnut bàduŋ: old age bàghuŋ: they bàkɔh: ladder bàŋ: terrible bàŋkəŋ: lion	bàŋgeè: ribs bànyuŋ: race bəsə̀: ahead bətɔ̀: at the head of bàtuh: night bòo: dog bòh: slave boh: so that bomo: well bɔ̀: corner bɔh: pumpkin bɔ̀w: nice, good bùh-kə̀: why buŋ: belly bu: evil buŋ-ncè: kitchen buse: in front bùsùuŋ: friendship
bw/Bw bwo: tired, soft bwotaŋ: lazy man	by/By bya: pear bya: still
c/C càtɔ: forehead ce: there cɛ̀cùuŋ: cassava	cw/Cw cwà: war cweècweè: sun cwo: sharp

cɛ̀njoh: chest
cɛtɔ: throat
cə̀wi: fireplace
cɔɔ́: mouth
cɔgeə̀y: door
cuŋ: price

d/D

dà: calabash for palm-wine
dìi: heavy
duŋ: game
dù̀u: long

f/F

fàh: work
faŋ: how
fæ: thunder
fèe: heart
fe: new
fə̀: where
fə̀bèŋ: squirrel
fə̀boh: fable
fə̀gumə̀-gumə̀: bat
fə̀ghaŋ: mat
fə̀kʉ: mortar
fə̀lih: smoke
fə̀lwilwi: yellow yam
fə̀ncih: gendarme, policeman
fə̀ncwe: bow (of arrow)
fə̀ndɔ̀: vein
fə̀njey: star
fə̀nyuŋ: bird

fə̀nywe: knife
fə̀ŋgwɛ̀: salt
fə̀syɛ̀: gizzard
fə̀stʉŋ: truly
fə̀yɛ: root
fifi: entier
fikə̀: where
fiŋku: ring
fɔ̀: day
fo: compound
foŋ: on
fɔ̀ŋ: first
fɔ: out
fɔŋ: fat
fɔ̃ɔŋ: eight
fu: white
fùŋ: chief
fʉ̀ʉ: fever
fù̀kah: stick
fù̀ntaŋ: fruit
fʉŋ: black, dirty
fʉŋ: leg
fù̀ŋkɔh: cow

fy/Fy	g/G
fyə̀: mouse fyə̀-bə̀to-jɛ̀bɛ̀: rabbit fyə̀-ndɔŋ: rat	gɛ: chin gɔ̀: poison gùu: cold gʉ̀: voice
gw/Gw	gh/Gh
gwagwa: duck gwò: skin, shoe gwò-fʉkah: back of tree	ghah: big, rich ghɛŋ: small ghɔ̀w: farm ghoŋ: egg
h/H	j/J
haŋ: he, him hɛ̀: there huŋ: here	ja: palm nut jʉ̀ʉ: hunger jʉ̀ʉŋ: back (of body)
k/K	
kabisɛ̀: cabbage kaŋ: corn beer kàŋ: leader keh: penis kɛh: light kə̀: what kə̀bah: table kə̀baŋ: fufu kə̀baŋ-kyɛ: bread kə̀bɛ: thigh kə̀bey: field kə̀boh: hole kə̀bwa: tiger kə̀bɔŋ-lwe: nose kə̀bʉ: rainy season kə̀byɛŋgeèy: veranda kə̀cə: village, home	kə̀ndwi: hippopotamus kə̀njə̀: key kə̀nswey: language, speech kə̀ntə̀: spoon kə̀ntaŋ: insect kə̀ntuŋ: heat kə̀ŋaŋ: scorpion kə̀ŋi-wa: finger-nail kə̀ŋi-wo: toe-nail kə̀ŋgeè: rib kə̀ŋgʉʉ̀h: jealousy kə̀ŋgwe: lighter kə̀ŋgwo-cɔ̀: lip kə̀ŋka-tɔ: headscarf kə̀ŋkoh: dumb kə̀sah: stomach kə̀sʉ: thread

kàcɔŋ: chimpanzee
kàdɛ̀dɛ̀: nothing
kàdəh: wound
kàfwaàbaŋ: paint
kàfwaàyi: food
kàghe: bitter leaf
kàghəh: cowrie
kàghɔh: mushroom
kàka: iron, metal
kàkà-wi: charcoal
kàkuŋ: bed
kàkwyɛ: bone
kàkwi: umbrella
kàkwo: belt
kàli: tongue
kàloŋ: dry season
kàlow: guitar
kàlùŋ: fear
kàlʉ: bamboo
kàmbà: bag
kàmbɔ̀lɛ̀: tadpole
kànce: day
kànci: lid
kàncih: mortar pistle
kàndàŋ: cricket, whistle
kàndùŋ: darkness, shadow

kàswaà: hoe
kàtaàŋ: trap
kàtàŋ: elephant
kàtaŋ: box
kàtakɔh: snail
kàto: ear
kàtɔ: head
kàtɔŋgeèy: roof
kàtɔ-yɛ̀kʉ: young woman
kàtɔ-yɛ̀lɔŋ: young man
kàtʉ: tree
kàtʉʉ̀: order, command
kàtʉ-ŋwàh nà: pen
kàtwaà: intestine
kìbi: dust
kicah: soil
kicye: mud
kindwe: fly
kìinsɛ: sugarcane
kìnswo: elephant grass
kìiswɛ: sand
ko: death
kúməkáŋ: tortoise
kusà: blunt
kuŋ: beans
kuŋ-màkalɛ̀: rice
kʉ: pot
kʉh: colour
kʉkà: how
kʉŋ: crab

kw/Kw

kwɛ̀mbəh: shoulder
kwɛ̀: four
kwo: forest
kwo-màkalɛ̀: cocoyam

ky/Ky

kyà: grainary
kye: money

<u>L</u> Laŋ: today lĺŋ: brother/sister lotə̀: really lɔŋ: husband lɔ̀ŋ: hot, expensive	lɔsʉ: green luŋ: room lùŋgà: bucket <u>lw/Lw</u> lwe: cathar/nose lwi: biller
<u>m/M</u> maà: lake maŋgolo: mango masiŋ: machine me: neck mə̀: I, me mə̀: infinitive marker mə̀bàŋ: to hate mə̀be: to give birth mə̀beh: to carry mə̀bɛ̀ɛŋ: to steal mə̀bɛŋ: to sleep mə̀bɛsə̀: to threaten mə̀bəh: to break mə̀bi: to ask mə̀biŋ: to accept mə̀bo: to lack mə̀boh: to beat (a drum) mə̀bɔ: to build mə̀bʉ: to bend down, to bow mə̀bʉŋ: to come back mə̀bʉ̀ŋ: to dance mə̀bwa: to weave, to plait mə̀bwè: peace mə̀cə̀h: to jump mə̀cay: to sneeze mə̀ce: to sejourn	mə̀liŋ: to wrap mə̀lɔ: to warm mə̀lɔlɔ: brain mə̀lɔh: to bewitch mə̀lɔŋ: to bite mə̀luh: wine, drink mə̀lʉ̀h: to forbid, to refuse mə̀lʉ̀ŋ: to hide mə̀lʉŋ: to cultivate mə̀lwa: to lick mə̀lweŋ: to scent mə̀mə̀h: to wear mə̀mè: to swallow mə̀mɛ̀h: to throw mə̀mʉ̀: to taste mə̀mʉ̀: to finish mə̀nɛ̀: to defecate mə̀nɛ: to cook mə̀no: to drink mə̀nɔ̀: to sit down mə̀nʉ̀ŋ: to lay mə̀nswə̀: magic mə̀nsʉlɛ: spark mə̀nyah: to write mə̀nyɔ: to suck mə̀sa: to tear

mècih: to wipe
mèciŋ: to see off
mècinj: to gather
mècisù:to fill in
mècitè: to cover
mècɔh: to remove
mècu: to tie
mècuh: to pound
mècya: to pass
mècyetè: to slice
mècwah: to borrow, to lend
mèdæ: to fly
mèduŋ: to play
mèdùh: to show, to teach
mèfaŋ: to be afraid
mèfatè: to decrease
mèfe: to receive
mèfihi : to tell
mèfi:to sell
mèfùh: to measure
mèfùsè: to resemble
mèfwè: to blow
mèfwù: blindness
mèfye: to get rotten
mègantè: to help
mègè: to go
mègo: to fall
mèghay: to yawn
mègwà: to grind
mègwàsè: to iron, to fold
mèje: to come
mèjɔ̀ŋ: to follow
mèka: to cough

mèsæ: to dry
mèsah: to seize
mèsaŋ: to split
mèsɛ: to count
mèsihi: to put down
mèsinè: to slide
mèsu: to drag, to pull
mèsɔ̀: to wash
mèswà: to insult
mèswi: to pour
mèta: to sew
mètaŋ: to begin
mètey: to read
mètiŋ: to push
mèto: to dig
mètɔŋ: to send
mètɔh: to stroll
mètɔw: to whistle
mètu: to vomit
mètùŋ: to roast, to burn
mètuŋ: to shoot
mètɯ: to lift up
mètwa: to burst
mètwey: to bury
mètye: to grow
mèway: to put in
mèwɛ: to whip
mèwo: oil
mèwuh: to swell
mèya: to be sick
mèyàtè: to untie
mèyey: to see
mèyè: to make, to cause

màkaŋ: to squeeze màkey: to cry màkoò: to die màkɔ̀: to like màkɔh: to climb màkɔ́ŋ: to touch màkɔŋ: to knock (door) màkuŋ: to scrape, to enter màkʉ̀: to want màkʉh: to wait màkwaŋ: to try màkwà: to give màlàh: to report màlaŋ: to marry	màyɔ: to hear màyɔh: to rub màyuŋ: to buy màyʉ̀: to sweep màyʉŋ: to wake up màywinà: to shout màywisà: to respire màze: to eat màzo: to kill mindow: blood mo: water mɔ̀h: one mʉh: dew
mb/Mb mbà: meat mbàh: fog mbàsɛ̀: soup mbe: world mbɛ̀: sleep mbɛɛ̀: walking stick mbimbi: ant	mbɔɔ́ŋ: real mbɔŋkʉ: potter mbumbu: mosquito mbùuŋ: grain mbʉlʉ: bell mbʉ̀ŋùu: body mbʉ̀ŋgeèy: wall
mf/Mf mfey: bangle mfey: bicycle mfɔ̀ŋ: first	n/N nàŋ: as nɛ̀: who
nc/Nc ncɛ: mother ncʉŋ: all ncyæ̀: sky	ndw/Ndw ndwe: dress, cloth ndwo: corn pudding
nd/Nd ndàlàh: sweet potato ndɛlwɨ̀i: bile	nj/Nj njàaŋ: axe

ndoh: thief ndɔw: horn, cup nduyuŋ: yesterday ndʉ̀ bàah: tobacco, cigarette ndʉh: poison	njɛ̀h: outside njɔɔ̀: thorn njʉʉ̀: hedgehog njʉ̀ŋ: dream
ns/Ns nsah: niddle nsàhà: cap nsɛ̀ɛ: tail nsɛ: ground nsʉʉ̀: jar	nt/Nt ntah: between ntàndwe: dress maker ntaŋ: branch ntìi: louse ntɔh: palace ntɔɔ̀ŋ: message
ntw/Ntw ntwoòlàŋ: blacksmith	
ny/Ny nyah: yellow nyì: animal nyikaŋ: monkey nyikɔh: horse nyiŋ: chain nyɔ̀h: annoyed nyù: hair	nyw/Nyw nywèe: cutlass nywì: God
ŋ/ƝŊ ŋo: rain ŋu: milk ŋùu: month ŋubə̀: with ŋumfe: moon	ŋw ŋwàh: clean, bright wàhn: book ŋwa-ywo: bee hive
ŋg/ƝŋG ŋga: cashew nut ŋgàlʉ: garri ŋgaŋ: week ŋgeèy: house ŋgeè-mfeèy: prison ŋgeè –nywi: church	ŋgɔ̀h: termite ŋguù: fowl ŋguŋ: pithon ŋgùtɔ̀: deaf ŋgw/ƝŋGw ŋgwà: seed, family ŋgwaba: guava

ŋgàh: trouble ŋgòoh: year ŋgɔh: stone	ŋgwàlàh: okro ŋgwaŋ: sour ŋgwàsæ: corn
ŋk/Ŋk ŋkah: wood ŋkàəh: cock ŋkò: type	ŋkɔ̀ĭwəà: tomorrow ŋkɯ̀ɯrope ŋkumbə̀h: lizard
s/S sàh: dispute sàh-ŋgɔŋ: earth worm sàh-ŋguŋ-guŋ: spider se: eye sɛy: profit sə̀ncʉ̀ŋ: all sisyæ: scissors sòo: fish sɔ̀h: bottle	sɔw: teeth suka: sugar sw/Sw swɛ̀: shallow swɛ: grave sy/Sy syæ̀: cumb
t/T ta: already tahaŋ: because taŋ: five tɛ̀kə̀: so that tɔdi: shame tɔ̀w: temper tɔw: navel tɯŋ: heart, in tye: three	w/W wa: hand wàaŋ: child wàaŋ-bwoð: baby wàaŋ-bəkʉ: girl wàaŋ-bə̀lɔŋ: boy wàaŋ-bə̀nywi: twins wey: market wɛh: strong, powerful wə̀wə̀: also wi: fire wo: foot wuh: fat
y/Y yɛ̀: person yɛ̀bə̀luŋ: mendicant yɛ̀cəə̀ŋ: someone yɛ̀-dʉ̀ʉh: teacher	yɛ̀-toŋ: stranger yi: name yilə: sluggish yɔmu: plum yɔ̀nʉyɔ̀nʉ: bee yɔ̀ɔŋ: dry

yɛ̀h: time yɛ̀lɔŋ: friend yɛ̀-ntoŋ: errand boy yɛ̀-ta: adult	<u>yw/Yw</u> ywà: snake ywo: honey ywoŋkɔ: evening
<u>z/Z</u> zoɓ:wife.	