PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE

ON

ASSURING THE FEASIBILITY OF STANDARDIZATION

WITHIN DIALECT CHAINS

NOORDWIJKERHOUT, THE NETHERLANDS

SEPTEMBER 1988

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foreword

Of necessity, communication involves standardization. The sender and receiver adjust to each other's idiolect or dialect or language. For written communication to be used successfully, it is desirable for the sake of the people involved that a single form be used by as large a number of communities and dialects as possible. It is desirable because increasing the number of people who can communicate with each other increases the pool of potential authors and readers. Having more audience motivates the authors to write. Having more to read motivates literacy. Governments request maximum standardization in language planning. It reduces the cost to government and for education thus allowing them to accomplish what otherwise they find difficult or impossible. Knowing your neighbors better should also lower tension and promote unity.

Yet, the circle must not be drawn too large. If people cannot learn to understand the standard form easily and quickly, literacy will fail just as surely as it will if the circle is drawn too small. The chosen standard must be both understandable and desired by the people involved. Thus the task is to discover the optimum speech form to serve the maximum feasible number of dialects or languages; it involves both linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

In the past, boundary drawing has usually been part of dialect intelligibility analysis, modified subsequently by the results of language attitude evaluation. Political and social pressures in many places, however, indicate the need for efforts toward standardization over a broader scope of dialects and languages than has been assumed from intelligibility tests. Over time the written form for major languages such as English and German has adequately served dialects with wide differences. We need to find ways to facilitate and promote that in other language continua where the circumstances (political, social, motivational) make it appropriate. There is strong interest in, indeed insistence on, standardization in many countries of Africa. We assume this will include initial literacy and preparation of some literature in a greater number of dialects/languages coordinated with definite promotion and instruction toward a smaller number of standards.

To put it differently, standardization may be possible between speech varieties that are not comprehensible on first meeting, but which with adequate exposure may become comprehensible. One can talk of a two-day or of a three-week difference, for example, referring to the length of time living with the new variety before understanding it. People with widely differentiated speech may be able to agree on a standard written form while retaining differences in spoken form and pronunciation.

Although a large body of literature exists on language planning on a

national or large regional level, not much has been written for the local level. This round table conference was sponsored by SIL and the J. Howard Pew Freedom Trust in September 1988 to begin correcting that situation. It is anticipated that more will be developed on this subject in the future.

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preface

The idea that the Summer Institute of Linguistics should proactively study the possibilities of wider dialect standardization is an idea that crystalized with Frank Robbins after talking with Mark Karan. Mark outlined the situation in southern Benin with the many Gbe dialects, the problems this presents to the Benin government, and the potential advantages that would accrue if the way to unite these many speech varieties could be found. Frank decided SIL should find ways to put its best efforts into wider standardization and asked me to organize the task.

Language planning at the national and regional level has been studied extensively. But almost nothing exists in the literature describing standardization on the local level. It was thought that a major contribution would be made if projects that SIL embarked upon should be well documented so that whether successful or not, others could learn from the experience.

The first phase of any such project is background research, next, language survey assessment, then, strategy planning. A proposal was written for this beginning phase which set objectives, outlined a plan of action, and estimated costs. Supplemental funding was requested and granted from the J. Howard Pew Freedom Trust. Eight dialect groups from different parts of Africa where SIL was working were selected and sociolinguists, both guests and members of SIL, were invited to attend a round table to discuss the issues and help each other with ideas and information. Travel expenses for the Round Table were provided by the Trust.

Since this was the first meeting in this effort, it was primarily the invited guests who had prepared material to present. For most participants, there was interaction on a more informal basis. Although it was not planned beforehand, the quality of the prepared presentations by our guests was such that it was felt that others would benefit if a proceedings were prepared for general distribution. A second round table meeting is planned for May 1989.

The chart which follows shows the eight African dialect clusters that were chosen for special study and development. The persons shown as SIL leaders were chosen by the SIL administrators of the countries involved and were each participants in the Round Table. They are Ole Bjorn Kristensen, Rene Vallette, Andrew Ring, Robert Carlson, Richard Watson, Keith Beavon and Gordon Williams. Other participants were Frank Robbins, Ethel Robbins, Elizabeth Johnson, Constance Kutsch Lojenga, Mark Karan, Deborah Hatfield, Kate Ring, and Ted Bergman in addition to the authors of the articles in this volume listed later.

THE EIGHT AFRICAN DIALECT CLUSTERS REPRESENTED AT THE ROUND TABLE ON DIALECT STANDARDIZATION, 1988

	TEKE	FULFULDE	MOLE	SENUFO	MORU-MA'DI	MEKAA	GBE	MANDE, W.
COUNTRIES	Congo, (Gabon, Zaire)	Senegal, Benin, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Sudan, Cameroon, Chad, Cen. Afr. Rep.	Ghana	Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali	Sudan, Zaire, Uganda	Cameroon, (Eq. Guinea, C. A. R., Congo)	Benin (Togo, Nigeria)	Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, Mauritania, Liberia, Sierra Leone
LGS. MAX/MIN	7 / 4	10 / 7	5 / 2	16 / 7	10 / 6	16 / 8	17 / 1-3	? 25 / 15
SIL LEADER entity	Kristensen Cen Af Gr	Vallette BF/Niger	Ring Ghana	Carlson CI/Mali	Watson Sudan	Beavon Cam/Chad	— Togo/Benin	Williams Senegal/G/G-B
POPULATION	400,000	12,000,000	500,000	1,500,000	900,000	? 300,000	? 1,500,000	? 10,000,000+
LITERACY	? <50%	? <5%	5 - 10%	<25% in CI <5% BF & Mali	? 10 - 30%	5 - 25%	15% +/-	?
TRANSLATIONS finished in-progress	Yaka/Laali Kukuya Teke West.	Adamawa (Cam.) Parakou (Ben.) Toucouleur (Se) N. Burkina Faso	Waale Lauara Jirapa	3 NT 8	Lugbara, Avokaya, Ma'di	none Koozime Mekaa Bajyeli	Gen, Gun, Fon	Bambara Dyula (SIL) Malinke (NTM) Xassonke (Nor/F Mandinka (WEC) Kono (LBT) Soninke, plus ?

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Prof. Dr. **Ursula Wiessmann**, who is the principal technical consultant to this project, gave the keynote address. Her paper concerns the Kaingang people with whom she worked in Brazil where standardization was successful. Not only does it provide us with a scientific case study, but it also provides inspiration that standardization, at least in the circumstance cited, is possible. She saw people with varying speech varieties come together to use a common literature who would not have done so at all based on the usual linguistic differences criteria.

Dr. **Etienne Sadembouo** proposes two procedures: how to combine community involvement and sociolinguistic expertise through the use of a language committee, and how to choose the best speech form out of a dialect complex for written standardization. He bases these recommendations on his very extensive review of each of the language programs in his country, Cameroon, where he has drawn from their experience in failures and successes. The typology and weighting procedure recommended for decision making was tried out by the participants of the Round Table who felt that it works very well. If it proves to be acceptable it provides the missing link between SIL's *Sociolinguistic Profile*, which is a checklist of factors important to decision making, and the decisions themselves. Dr. Sadembouo finds that even in the early stage of language survey assessment, the communities affected should participate in the planning.

Prof. Dr. **H. B. C. Capo**'s paper concerns orthographic principles and ideas for uniting the huge number of Gbe dialects--22 spoken in southern Benin, 16 in Togo, 18 in Ghana, and 7 in Nigeria. Dr. Capo thinks that all speakers could learn to read the Gen variety with just a little effort and write the way they speak once a unified orthography could be agreed upon. He himself speaks four of the dialects belonging to three of the five clusters within the Gbe network.

Mr. **Leonce Bouka** has written a paper for us describing the Teke dialects in Congo and Gabon. His paper was translated for us from the French by Mr. Ole Bjorn Kristensen. Both these men have begun work on this dialect chain which has four main divisions and other subdivisions. Although he is Congolese he is not a native Teke speaker. His doctoral studies in Brussels are concerning the whole Teke continuum.

Dr. **Richard Watson** coordinates three survey teams conducting the first phase of research on the Moro-Ms'di dialect complex. One team works among the people living in Sudan, another works in Zaire and the third is in Uganda. His paper has to do with the orthography approach

necessary to standardize in the different nations with their differing literacy and political expectations.

Dr. **Musimbi Kanyoro** offers balance out of her knowledge of the Luiya, cautioning against combining too many dialects without adequate basis for doing so or without adequate provision of necessary concomitants. Dr. Kanyoro's native tongue is one of the 17 varieties of Luyia. Her grandfather was one of the principals involved when the Bible was produced in a "standard" Luyia. And, she has studied the language prfessionally. When the Scriptures were first published, they were received and bought with great enthusiasm. But despite great hope they have not been used widely at all. Verb tenses can change to mean opposite tenses in certain dialects, word meanings change drastically, only five of seven contrasting vowels are written, tone is not marked at all. People do not identify with it as their language. At the time when the "union translation" came out, the people were feeling a need for unity against other, larger groups which threatened them. Later when the threat was removed, there was more felt need for emphasizing individuality. As Dr. Kanyoro analyses the situation, several things must be recognized: Bible translation alone is not sufficient, other written literature must be produced as well; the orthography decided upon must be backed by the government and taught in the public schools; the churches, too, must support the Union translation; the mood of the people needs to be positive toward wanting to become unified.

THE ABALUYIA OF KENYA: ONE PEOPLE, ONE LANGUAGE

What Can be Learned from the Luyia Project

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THE ABALUYIA OF KENYA: ONE PEOPLE, ONE LANGUAGE

What Can be Learned from the Luyia Project

Until a few years ago, the name Luyia (Luhya) was not known in Kenya. Today, some nearly three million people identify themselves in one way or another by this name, and yet its origins are as unclear as its interpretation seems to be.

The problem is that the term isn't simply a tribal or ethnic label like, for example, "Luo" or "Kamba" in the same country[1], and that a Mluyia, on being asked what tribe he belongs to, may not necessarily answer "Luyia" at all; in addition, he may claim not to understand the speech of other groups which are also classified as Abaluyia. This may in fact be true for him; inter-intelligibility among the Luyia dialects varies considerably - so much so that uncertainty still exists as to whether some dialects should be classified as Luyia or not. In the sixties the Ragoli Bible was well received by Maragoli speakers, and its language was also widely accepted by some Bukusu speakers because of a shared Quaker connection, despite the fact that Maragoli and Bukusu are probably the furthest removed from each other linguistically of all Luyia dialects. In contrast, the 1975 Union Luyia version[2] had a very mixed reception in all dialect areas.

In 1978, I carried out a research to find out why this was so. Union Luyia does not differ from some central Luyia dialects a fraction as much as Maragoli does from Bukusu; why, then, the unpopularity of the Union version?

The reasons are clearly not just linguistic, and if the situation were to be understood, it seemed necessary to obtain a more accurate picture

of the speakers' self perceptions, and to learn what, in the light of its historical origins, the term "Luyia" really meant to people identifying themselves as such.

Findings indicated that the notion of Obuluyia, or "Luyianess", is often paradoxical; criteria elicited included "people speaking the same language", "people living in the same area", "people eating the same food", etc., criteria which could equally well spply to any other superficially similar, but nevertheless distinct, groups such as the English and Scots. This paradox is illustrated in conversation recorded with a member of one of the Luyia dialect groups:

Q. What tribe do you belong to?
A. Mnyore.

Q. I thought you were a Luyia.
A. I am. I'm a Mnyore Luyia.

Q. Are all Luyia Wanyore then?
A. No.

Q. What other kinds are there?
A. Tiriki, Wanga, Isukha. . .

Q. If there are so many, what makes you all Luyia?
A. Well, we all live in western Kenya, and we speak the same language and greet with "mirembe", and we all eat ugali. . .

Q. Fine. What do you think of this Bible?
A. (flips through it) I can't read it clearly.

Q. But you said you all speak the same language, and this is a Luyia Bible!
A. Yes, but it's not my Luyia. It is an effort to read it.

Why is it an effort to read? A linguistic comparison between Lunyore and Union Luyia, which that Bible was written in and which is based on the Marama-Wanga dialects, indicates a 91% rate of inter-intelligibility, and there are no orthographic differences which might interfere with reading it. Further questioning revealed that the informant was a member of the Pentecostal Assembly of God, in whose church the Union Bible is not used. The same questions directed at another Lunyore speaker, this time an Anglican, in whose church the Union Bible is used, produced quite different results. While the first informant claimed that the words were unfamiliar and the constructions unnatural, the second identified with its language in a positive way; significantly, the first informant made it quite clear that he would rather read his Bible in Maragoli, a Luyia dialect sharing only 66% inter-intelligibility with Lunyore, or in Swahili, a totally different language, than in the closely-related Union Luyia.

A survey of these different loyalties to the various dialects brought a number of facts to light: in many locations where Union Luyia is used (especially in Anglican areas, since the Anglicans sponsored the production of the union version,) other translations from it into the local dialect are often made for the congregation. In contrast, an example of different language loyalties among speakers of the same dialect where the Roman Catholic church uses the Union version and the Quakers, whose church is a stone's throw away across the road, use the Maragoli version. Again, Swahili, besides being the language of the Salvation Army services throughout Kenya, is also widely used by all churches in multilingual areas. Significant is the fact that in emotional situations, such as funerals, or in informal ones, such as the reading of the announcements, the tendency is to use the language of the area regardless of the official church dialect.

Research Method

The 1969 Census was used as the basis for determining the ratio of informants from each dialect area. I did this initially by district, since the Census treats all the Abbaluyia as a single tribe. It was followed by Bungoma and then Busia (figure 1).

District	Male	Female	Total	% interviewed, by area
Kakamega	185	200	385	64.12%
Bungoma	73	75	148	24.70%
Busia	31	36	67	11.18%

Figure 1.

The objective of this research among the Abaluyia was to establish both the linguistic and the attitudinal criteria for defining their supposedly monolithic tribe.[3] My focus was upon determining the people's self-perception vis-a-vis their own (inner) group, and the same people's perception of other (or outer) groups in the light of the linguistic evidence. In other words, the study was to look at language in its social and cultural context.

Three separate tests were designed to achieve this. The most elaborate was in the form of a sociolinguistic questionnaire, which included sections on language and ethnic attitude, language use, language loyalty and language needs among the Abaluyia; in addition, it elicited cultural, political, religious and socio-economic information.

The second was an intelligibility test. The purpose of this was to determine how well speakers of different Luyia dialects could under-

stand one another; the third test was also an intelligibility test, but designed specifically to ascertain reactions from speakers of different dialects to the language of the Union Luyia Bible, published in 1975. This I called the 'scripture test', and I hoped to learn from it the extent to which different Luyia groups could share the same literature (e.g. religious literature written in Union Luyia).

As well as these tests, a word-list of 100 items, and a supplementary list of 75 sentences (both originally used for the Survey of Zambian Languages, 1967-1971) were elicited for the 17 dialects I consider to exist in the language. I also collected a selection of orally transmitted texts in the same 17 dialects. These were to form the basis of a more detailed linguistic comparison in order to ascertain the degree of linguistic proximity among them.

The Luyia sociolinguistic profile

The Kenya government lists the Abaluyia as one tribe. Further sources, both governmental and academic, indicate that there are between 15 and 22 subgroups within the Aabaluyia. My own estimation, based upon these documents and the data I elicited in the field, indicate that there are seventeen such subgroups, the others either being non-linguistic divisions within one of these, or a fragmenting linguistic group whose classification remains to be determined.[4] The Abaluyia are a highly mobile people, and many communities of migrants are found elsewhere in Kenya, in particular in South Nyanza district, Rift Valley Province and Nairobi. In earlier years there was also substantial migration into Uganda and Tanzania, though recent political events have prompted the return of many of these. The particularly high population density in Western Province is probably the largest single factor accounting for large-scale migration from the area.

The Aabaluyia have had a vary substantial exposure to western education. There have been schools in that part of the country since 1900,

all originally organized by the churches and missions; for this reason, religious involvement of one sort or another, sometimes quite excessive, has become very characteristic of the people of Western Province. In some areas, I was unable to find anybody who did not identify with a church; 24 different denominations, nearly all Christian, have been retrieved from the quesionnaires, (Kanyoro 1983) and at least a dozen more are known to exist throughout that area.

Most Abaluyis claim to be bi- or multi-lingual, usually in their own dialect, Swahili, and sometimes English. A substantial number also claimed proficiancy in some other languages, in particular Luo, Kalenjin and Kikuyu. In the case of the first two, this usually proved to be true in border areas; some Wanyore, Marachi, Nyala-B and Samia were quite at home in Luo, while some Bukusu, Tachoni, Kabras and Tiriki spoke Kalenjin with varying degrees of fluency. On the other hand, when investigated further the claim to a knowledge of other languages was usually found to be an exaggeration; individuals who said they spoke Kikuyu, for example, almost always turned out to know only a few words and greetings.[5]

Both children and adults are familiar with the term Luyia and will either identify themselves verbally by this label, or by the name of their subgroup, though not usually by both at once. It was not, however, the case that they were able to name all other Luyia groups; most people readily gave their own and the names of those subgroups bordering them - sometimes neighboring non-Luyia groups were also counted as Luyia (the Luo, Masaba, Gishu, and Terik were listed in the questionnaire returns), suggesting a geographical rather than an ethnic link, like the earlier term Kavirondo. Asked who should not be counted as Abuluyia, informants consistently named those subgroups the furthest away from their own area, and in particular Bukusu and Lugooli.

The question on self-estimation indicated that most Abaluyia were content with their identity both as Luyia and as their particular subgroup,

and had no wish to be anything else. A few individuals, all of them in the poorly-educated, low income category, claimed to want to be Europeans, or sometimes Asians, the reason being that these people don't do any menial labour and have many privileges in Kenya. Less than 10% of those interviewed wanted to use a language other than their own in their church, and less than 5% wanted to teach their children Swahili or English before the ancestral language. This would indicate a high degree of linguistic pride, though significantly, less than 0.1% of the respondents wanted all Abbaluyia to learn the Union dialect in school. The three choices were consistently English, Swahili and their own dialect, with Swahili always second to their own.

Conclusions to be drawn from the above are that over the past few decades there has developed a consciousness of Luyia as a political and social entity, e.g. one based on more than linguistic criteria. It is also evident that each individual perceives himself above all in terms of his dialect group, and is only a Mluyia beyond that. A small number (ca. 4%) of respondents reflected the term Luyia altogether and identified only in terms of their subgroup; these were found among the Bukusu and Maragoli in particular, and seemed to be motivated by political reasons.

Dialect intelligibility

In my study, I employed the techniques outlined by Casad (1974) for testing dialect intelligibility. This involved testing spoken language among the various subgroups; the corpus used for this purpose was collected on cassette tape in each area I visited, and played to speakers in other areas on subsequent visits. Their understanding of the texts was measured and later compared. Fifteen sentences from each of the seven dialects I worked with were elicited; these were designed in such a way that they approximated a master set as closely as possible in

topic and structure. The reason for using such model sentences was to maintain the same degree of difficulty and to keep the subject matter in the same area.

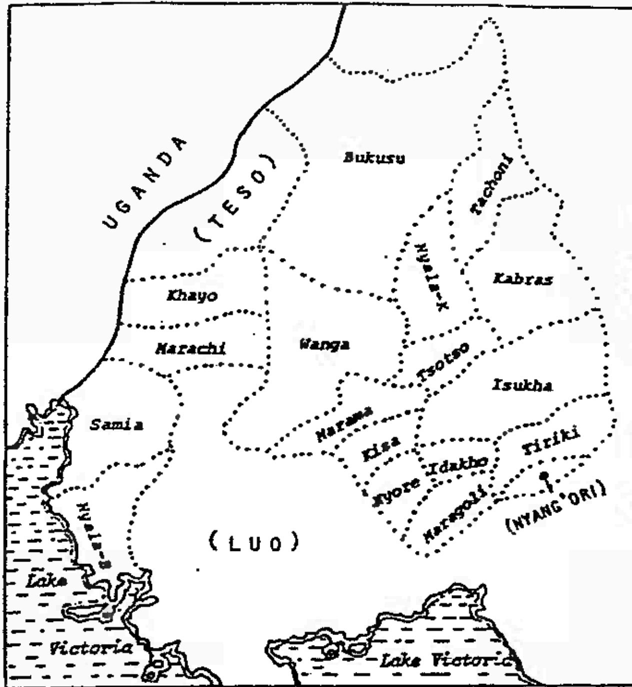

Figure 2.

Lack of time prevented my carrying out tha same test for all 17 dialects. The seven I chose to work with were Samia, Wanga, Nyore, Maragoli, Idakho, Bukusu and Bunyala Myale Kakamega (Nyala-K). I chose these in particular since they preresent the major differences found in all seventeen dialects. The locations of all the Luyia dialects are shown in Fig. 2.

Testing scores

The intelligibility testing scores are summarised in Fig. 3; here, the dialect area is listed in the left-hand column, and the speech samples along the top row. For example, test subjects speaking Nyore understood 66% of the Maragoli sample, 85% of the Idakho sample, 65% of the Nyala-K sample, and so on; conversely, the Nyore Speech sample was understood to a degree of 93% by the Maragoli, 92% by the Idakho, 89% by the Nyala-K speakers, and so on.

Language being tested

	Margoli	Idakho	Nyala-K	Bukuau	Wanga	Samia	Nyore
Margoli	1.00	0.93	0.87	0.54	0.84	0.68	0.93
Idkho	0.89	1.00	0.65	0.63	0.92	0.70	0.92
Nyala-K	0.55	0.90	1.00	0.85	0.92	0.94	0.89
Bukuai	0.21	0.60	0.89	1.00	0.82	0.80	0.71
Wanga	0.42	0.86	0.85	0.79	1.00	0.96	0.92
Samia	0.20	0.71	0.95	0.84	0.94	1.00	0.88
Nyore	0.88	0.85	0.85	0.80	0.91	0.77	1.00

Figure 3.

These results may be shown schematically (Fig. 4) to make the relationships clearer. Here, for purposes of determining the degrees on intelligibility, each of the seven dialects indicated is made to represent the other dialects in its subgrouping; thus, Samia and Busia Nyala (Nyala-B) are treated as one subgrouping, which is then represented by Samia. Maragoli, Bukusi, Nyala-K and Nyore are treated

singly, Idakho also includes Isukhya and Tiriki, and Wanga includes the greatest number with Marama, Kisa, Tsotso, Khayo, Marachi, Kabras and Tachoni. Note that although these groupings are based upon the responses of the informants themselves, later analysis has indicated some discrepancies; thus Tachoni appears to be lexically closer to Bukusu and morphosyntactically closer to Nyore than it is to Wanga in which group is it placed here.

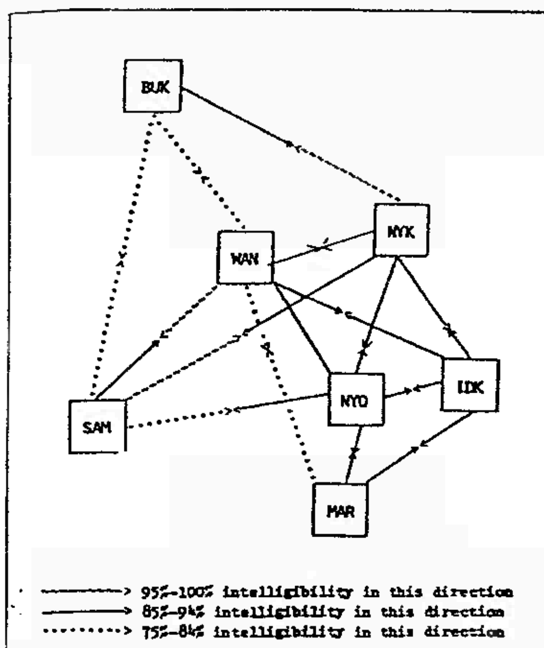

Figure 4.

Scores below 75% are not shown in Fig. 4. since these are considered to be degrees of poor understanding. The general indication of the diagram is that greatest understanding is between dialects which are geographically closest. This is undoubtedly because of the greatar degree of

interaction between the speakers, and the levelling effect which is coontinually taking place.

For each dialect, the test subjects were chosen from a location close to the geographical centre of the area. Informants were discounted if they had lived out of their dialect area for a month or longer.

The overall indications were that the entire Luyia area is marked in general by a fairly good degree of understanding but, at the same time, very good understanding between groups is rare; no two dialect groups share mutual intelligibility to this degree (that is, between 95% and 100%). Furthermore, in as far as significant intelligibility is concerned, Samia appears to be quite separate from the Eastern group including Idakho and Maragoli, while Maragoli and Bukuṣu also seem to be distinct in major ways from all other Luyia dialects. If we count the broken wavy line (~~~~~~~), i.e. very good understanding, as 3 points, the solid line (————), i.e. fair understanding, as 2 points, and the dotted line (..........), i.e. marginal understanding, as 1 point, the following breakdown is arrived at:

Wanga	19 points
Idakho	14 points
Nyore	12 points
Nyala-K	10 points
Samia	10 points
Bukusu	9 points
Maragoli	7 points

In other words, Wanga is most likely to be understood by a random selectalects, while Maragoli is least likely to be understood.

The test described sbove was designed to ascertain the varying degrees of mutusl intelligibility among the different luyia dialects. In addition to this, the same consultants were tested to determine how well

they understood the Union Luyia Bible. The percentage of the text in the Union dialect which the informants failed to understand is given in Fig. 6. From it, it can be seen that speakers of Bukusu failed to understand approximately 1/5 (or 18%) of the three scripture texts presented, the Maragoli 13%, the Idakho 9.5%, the Nyala-K 8.5% and the Samia and Nyore only about one word in twenty, i.e. they had a rate of misunderstanding of only 5%.

	Maragoli	Idakho	Nyala-K	Bukusu	Wanga	Samia	Nyore
MK-CN	.03	.03	.03	.10	0		.03
MK-NC	.07	.05	.04	.18	0		.02
MK Mean	.05	.04	.03	.13	0	.02	.02
RM-CN	.09	.06	.06	.14	.02		.04
RM-NC	.12	.08	.08	.18	.02		.04
RM Mean	.10	.07	.07	.16	.02	.07	.04
PV-CN	.20	.15	.12	.23	.01		.09
PV-NC	.26	.19	.20	.29	0		.08
PV Mean	.23	.17	.16	.26	.01	.07	.09
CN Mean	.11	.08	.07	.15	.01		.05
NC Mean	.15	.11	.10	.21	.01		.05
Mean	.13	.10	.09	.18	.01	.05	.05

The three scripture texts selected were St. Mark V, 1-10 (MK), Romans 1, 18-23 and Proverbs XVI, 1-2 and 4-5; both Christian (CN) and non-Christian (NC) informants were included.[6]

Although Bukusu and Maragoli both scored quite poorly, they each have scriptures in their own dialect (the first translation into Maragoli appearing in 1930, and the Bukusu translation being currently in progress). It is the Idakho group which seems to be in the greatest need of a Bible version in a representative of their cluster, from the point of view of attitude and comprehension; respondents in this group missed almost ten percent of the texts given them. Since Idakho stands half-

way between Wanga and Maragoli, according to the tests, its speakers cannot comfortably make use of translation in either of those dialects. The assumption that a translation is needed for this dialect especially is substantiated by the findings of the Catholic fathers who have used the Union Bible with Idakho-speaking congregations, and who report considerable misunderstanding of its text. Some priests in fact have found it necessary to translate portions of scriptures into Idakho. The Idakho have a very close linguistic and attitudinal affinity with the Isukha speakers, the two forming a single dialect cluster, and could share scriptures with them translated into either dialect. The same scriptures might also serve the Tiriki who, although linguistically closer to the Maragoli are less favourably inclined towards them. Here, attitudinal ties are of more practical significance than the linguistic ones.

The Nyala-K situation is not as clear-cut as the Idakho. Here, the degree of misunderstanding is somewhat lower (8.5% as opposed to 9.5%), and despite considerable linguistic differences, Nyala-K speakers have learned Bukusu to a remarkable degree. Another possibility is the Nyala-K speakers share literature written in their own dialect with the Samia; this has been suggested by some Nyala-K speakers. Thus Nyala-K speakers can use Bukusu translations, and Samia speakers might use Nyala-K translations, but would be unable to read Bukusu translations with which there is only marginal understanding.

Church leaders in the Samia-speaking area were more positive about the Union Luyia Bible than were the Idakho. One Samia minister began a translation into this dialect but abandoned it under pressure from members of the translation team of the Union version. Samia and Nyala-K share an intelligibility rate of 95% and could both use the same translations. However, there are arguments in favour of choosing Samia over Nyala-K, in particular because Samia has a much greater speaking population, extending even into Uganda, and in addition can be comfortably understood by speakers of Khayo and Marachi, who are equally at home

with Union Luyia and other Central dialects. The same speakers would have more difficulty with Nyala-K.

Insufficient results have been obtained for Nyore for any conclusions to be reached at this stage.

Old/Young and Christian/non-Christian factors

As indicated above, a contrast was made between Christian and non-Christian informants. The latter were mostly Muslim, with small numbers of individuals who were uncommitted to any church. In Fig. 6 these factors are compared with factors of age (young vs old). The latter are not given for Idakho because no older, non-Christian informants were available during the research period. "Old" here refers arbitrarily to individuals of 45 years and older. Fig. 6 summarizes the average degrees to which the informants understood the test material - both the intelligibility tests and the union Luyia texts (IT and UL). It can be seen, for example, that older respondents in Maragoli understood an average of 82% of the intelligibility tests and 90% of the scripture texts.

Language of test subject

	Maragoli	Idakho	Nyala-K	Bukusu	Wanga	Samia	Nyore	Average
IT-Old	.82	x	.91	.71	.86	.76	.77	.81
IT-Young	.79	x	.86	.72	.81	.80	.70	.79
IT-CN	.82	.82	.87	.75	.81	.81	.76	.81
IT-NC	.78	.82	.83	.69	.85	.78	.80	.80
UL-CN	.90	.92	.94	.85	.99	x	.95	.93
UL-NC	.95	.89	.90	.79	.99	x	.95	.90

Figure 6

For UL/CN and UL/NC, the figures have been arrived at by subtracting the error-percentage (given in Fig. 5) from 100%. Both old and young were tested because it is commonly believed that older speakers have a better knowledge of the vernacular than younger speakers. If it can be demonstrated that younger people are in fact losing fluency in their dialect, then those planning new literature would have to be cautious about producing further materisl in it. Findings indicate, however, that there is no significant difference between the scores of older and younger respondents. The older people as an average made 81% on the intelligibility tests, and the younger slightly below that, at 79%. It may be concluded, therefore, that both age groups can understand the vernacular equally well. The 3% discrepancy may be due to the retention of older lexical forms by more elderly speakers, and the corresponding innovation of new forms by younger speakers.

Similarly, the Christian/non-Christian distinction was also found to be insignificant. It was employed because it is sometimes claimed that Christians speaking one dialect can more readily learn to understand a Bible written in another dialect. It is wiedly believed that because of exposure to the scriptures in church, Christians can more easily master the same tests in any related dialect. This infact proved to be the case to some extent; in no dialect did Christians score lower than non-Christians in the scripture testing, though this is probably as much the result of prior familiarity with the content of the texts as anything else. In no instance was the difference in CN/NC scores here significant enough to warrant special attention.

One of the main objections to the Union Luyia version was that it sounded unnatural, in much the same way as "I have hunger", a literal translation of the French idiom would be understood but rejected by an English speaker. Selecting a higher rate of cognate forms among the dialects is possible, but while it might achieve greater comprehension, it would produce in each case a synthetic dialect - the very reason for the poor response to the Union version.

Notes

1. As well as Luyia, there are two other recently-formed tribal cover names: Kalenjin which has 13 dialects (van Otterloo, 1979) and Miji-Kenda, which refers to a cluster of nine dialects on the coast. In a study by Sim (1978) an attempt has been made to establish a similar cover-term for the Kikuyu and Embu dialects, which would be known collectively as the Mount Kenya group, though for linguistic rather than social or political purposes.

2. Union Luyia (also called Luyia Union) was the product of a committee set up in 1942 by the LNC (Local Native Council), the Colonial District Education Board and by various churches in western Kenya, then known as North Nyanza. Three principles were to be followed in the creation of this dialect: orthography was to be based on the pronunciation of the majority; grammar was to follow that of the central dialects (Marama, Wanga, Kisa and Tsotso) without reference to any other dialects, and the vocabulary was to use items common to all dialects. A much more detailed discussion of these principles may be found in Appleby (1955). Lee Appleby was secretary to the committee and a member of the Anglican church at Butere, in the Marama-speaking area. Establishing a common grammar for the Union dialect was no problem, since all central dialects share the same structure. The greatest problem and one which remains to be adequately dealt with was lexical. Appleby was also responsible for the only published grammar of Union Luyia (1961).

3. Shorter (1974:3-4) refers to such creations as "super-tribes": Colonial government certainly placed a premium on tribal loyalties, and tribal consciousness was heightened as a result. 'Arbitrary lists of tribes were compiled. . .these activities encouraged rather than prevented the coming into existence of new ethnic groupings. . .and the formation of such "super-tribes" or amalgams as the Abaluyia and the Kalenjin of Kenya are cases in point.

4. Appleby (1955:181) also posits 17 dialects for Luyia. Such a fragmenting or emerging language is Kinyang'ori, indicated in Fig. 2. This is sometimes classed as a Luyia dialect, e.g. by Were (1967:82), and is spoken in an ethnically-mixed area where Terik, Tiriki, Luo, Nyore and Maragoli speakers all live. The common dialect appears to have lexical and structural characteristics from Bantu, Nilotic and Afroasiatic, and may be classifiable as a pidgin.

5. This may be for reasons of prestige alone. McLane (1978:312) reports speakers of Calo who "when asked by a stranger if they know [it] will usually say yes even though further questioning reveals that they know only a few items".

6. Test results for Samia have not included the Christian/non-Christian distinctions because the decision to compare these two groups for this dialect had not been made until after the Samia testing had been completed.

POST RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The Abaluyia of Western Kenya

Between 1980 and 1987 I interacted with the Abaluyia people on different levels. First, as a speaker of the language and secondly as a Bible translation consultant. My interest in language intelligibility coontinued, but by the participant participation method. I have noticed that Luyia people actually make a great effort to understand one another, which they do. I have come to believe that the kind of dialect intelligibility testing that we do using the linguistic tools such as the Casad test helps us to be able to quantify our data and make it neat and scholarly. But they do not tell us the whole story. It is granted that face to face language interaction yields better intelligibility results due to extra-linguistic factors. But the question of intelligibility between related dialects seems to depend not only on the linguistic features, but on the willingness of people to go an extra mile for each other. They will always count the cost and profit. When I was doing research among the Abaluyia, the people knew that I was a researcher, perhaps from a governmental institution.

The people wanted to emphasize the uniqueness and legitimacy of each dialect, and so they did not always make a sufficient effort to understand another dialect. In the later years I observed that many women who marry into adjacent Luyia dialect areas do not make the effort to learn their husband's languages. Rather, they maintain their own dialect, and they are understood in their new homes. If there had been a problem, the women would not have been allowed to maintain their own language. If one comparea this with women of other languages who marry Luyia men, one will find that they always have to learn their husband'a language.

Another observation I made was that intelligibility factors fluctuate with the political climate. Between 1986-87, I followed closely a political disagreement between two prominent luyia politicians. Mr. Moses Mudavadi, a Logooli speaker, and Mr. Martin Shikuku, a Marama speaker, were both members of the Kenyan parliament. The two disagreed on a number of political issues affecting Western Kenya where the Luyia cluster of languages are located. Luyia speakers started taking sides with each one of these two. During that time, quite a lot of subjective attitudes regarding intelligibility in Luyia cluster appeared. Those who aligned with Marama member of parliament emphasized the distinction of Logooli as a separate language. Those who aligned with Mr. Mudavadi, if they were not themselves Logooli speakers, tended to see Loogooli as one of the Luyia cluster. The story was not as simple as that. Within this cluster of Luyia, people were deciding to understand or not to understand one another by interprating the political scene of the time.

Thus the volatile nature of dialect intelligibility brings certain questions to the surface. How seriously should we rely on the results of the dialect intelligibility measure that we make? What does this mean when we translate our results into something more permanent like literature?

The Luyia Bible is an example. For the 40 years that the Anglican Church worked on its translation, many Luyia people participated in some form or another, even though it is a well known fact that meaningful participation of the African people in translation was very minimal during that time. But could it be that for some reason or another the Australian deaconess, Appleby, based her judgment on the then current intelligibility "attitudes" which showed that these people could indeed understand each other? This theory could be supported by other factors. During these eight yaars among tha Abaluyia I found out that the

factors alone. The Luyia Bible was translated when a lot of people in Kenya were interested in solidarity. They were opposed to being fragmented in the "divide and rule" policy of colonial Britain. The "obuluyianese", the Luyia unity was important, and therefore a lot ot pwople might have made the necessary effort to understand each other.

After independence, new political and administrative divisions were made. Although these were not drawn along dialect boundaries, Luyia people at this time did not feel their unity was being threatened and therefore they started to re-emphasize their diversity. Hence speakers of different dialects began to highlight the uniqueness of their language. It is within that mood that the 1975 translation of the Bible came. Together with the political climate of the 70's was the fact that there was no other material written and promoted in Union Luyia.

My present thinking is that if the churches or the Kenyan educational system had supported the use of Union Luyia, then we would have had a totally different story to tell. That is to say, as much as I am still opposed to Union languages, because they are unnatural and nobody's real language, I am also aware of the fact that such languages can work if there are proper support systems, and if the basis of the union is not linguistically too far removed from the language of the readers. For me this is a significant shift from where I was in 1980 (Angogo-Kanyoro, 1983), when the field research among the Abaluyia people confirmsd to me over and over again that the people could not all use shared literature.

I still, however, stand by my suggestion for dividing Luyia into smaller units. A cluster of 17 or more dialects is too big to address either for a single study or for providing one literature. It was quite obvious in the case of Luyia that intelligibility was better between dialects adjacent to each other, for reasons of easy mobility, intermarriage and the sharing of market centers. Similarly, attitudes within neighboring dialects are more positive. Hence, I suggested that the

Luyia cluster needed to be divided into five clusters (see Agogo Kanyoro 1983:256.) I still stand by the number but have slightly changed the members of each cluster to the following:

Bukusu (including Tachoni Nyala of Kakanega)
Samia (Nyala Busia, Marachi Xayo)
Wanga - including Marama, Kisa Tsotso, Kabras, Nyore
Idaxo - Isukha Tiriki
Logooli

The three division possibility in Angogo Kanyoro 1983:256 still holds.

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