

MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH

SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON LITERACY SURVEYS  
CONDUCTED DURING OCTOBER 1990 - FEBRUARY 1991  
with Literacy Survey Summary for Limbum

Ian P.Cheffy and Grace Toh

Société Internationale de Linguistique  
B.P.1299  
Yaoundé, Cameroon  
1992

### Background

The Cameroon Branch is in the process of developing some pilot projects of community-integrated literacy programs. Each pilot project would include 3-5 languages, which have reached an adequate level of language development and literacy. A regional teams of literacy specialists, consisting of SIL and national personnel, would then implement an intensive program of adult literacy over six to eight years. The pilot projects would focus on the following objectives:

- 1) Linking adult literacy with a mother tongue school program (PROPELCA)
- 2) Integrating adult literacy with development
- 3) Mobilizing local infrastructures
- 4) Training national literacy specialists for collaborating agencies
- 5) Aiming at self-management and a measure of self-funding.

It is planned to eventually have pilot projects in at least three regions with different socio-cultural and socio-economic dynamics in order to develop appropriate models for different situations.

Over the years SIL in Cameroon has been involved in language development and experimental literacy in some 25 language groups and has given assistance to many more through its service of courses, workshops and consulting. In order to determine where to set up the first proposed pilot projects, literacy surveys were carried out in seven languages that met the basic criteria of language and literacy development.

### Survey objectives

- 1) collect data with regards to potential community-integrated literacy programs giving insights on:
  - a) local infrastructures for
    - (i) adult literacy classes
    - (ii) development activities
  - b) degree of cooperation
  - c) potential personnel
- 2) convey the vision of the community-integrated adult education programme to:
  - a) local SIL team
  - b) language committee
  - c) local authorities
  - d) local development agencies

### Survey methods

Four questionnaires (QI-IV) were prepared, each aimed at one specific area of the information needed. (Samples attached)

QI - to gather background information on demography, language development and literacy

QII - aimed at supervisors of local literacy and development agencies to obtain insight into the agencies programs and potential collaboration in literacy

QIII - aimed at the extension workers of the agencies to determine their felt needs in communication and measure cooperation

QIV - aimed at villagers to determine their felt needs and experience with the above agencies

In each language the surveys were conducted in two phases as outlined below. Survey teams consisted of a mix of SIL and national personnel, some from central institutions other from the local level. All nationals contributed to this effort as part of their contribution to ANACLAC/NACALCO, a non-governmental association of language committees.

Phase 1: Gathering background information and information on development agencies (QI and II).

Required time: one to two weeks.

Carried out by a team consisting of the following persons:

- 1) leader who conveys the vision
- 2) assistant
- 3) local participant, e.g. SIL or language committee member

Step 1: Preparation in Yaounde:

fill in background questionnaire, sections which are labeled with Y

Step 2: In the region which is going to be surveyed:

contact an official who supports the language programme to take you to the OU (sous prefect), get information on local development agencies, work on sections of background questionnaire labeled with A

Step 3: Visit infrastructures for (potential) adult literacy such as the ministry of youth and sports, if locally represented and different development agencies, fill in questionnaire II

Step 4: Gather potential working committee, i.e. people who could be useful for the literacy programme (not necessarily the same people who are in the language committee), complete background questionnaire, sections labeled with S

Step 5: Chose a village as a case study for gathering information on extension workers and villagers (questionnaire III and IV)

Priorities:

- a) PROPELCA village
- b) village with active MI adult literacy programme
- c) village with health/agriculture programme with potential adult classes

Step 6: go or train for phase 2

Phase 2: gathering information on extension workers and villagers (questionnaire III and IV).

Required time: up to one week.

Carried out:

- either by team who did phase 1
- or by local participants

- Interviewing extension workers:
- 2 health extension workers
  - 2 agriculture extension workers
  - 2 extension workers from another agency

Interviewing villagers: Stratified sample, considering the following potentially influencing factors:

- age (two categories: 15-25; 40-60)
- sex (both categories: M;F)
- education (only illiterates/semi-literates)

### Languages surveyed

There are a good number of regions in with clusters of adequately developed languages that could be served by regional literacy teams as conceived for the pilot projects proposed. It is foreseen that no more than three regional pilot projects will be started over the next six years; i.e. one every two years. Out of all possible regions four were chosen for the initial surveys. The following criteria were applied in making this choice. They are listed in order of priority:

- 1) Linkage of adult literacy with Propelca program
- 2) Balance between anglophone and francophone part of the country
- 3) Projects with different socio-economic and socio-cultural factors

In order to make maximum use of the limited resources only a few key languages in each region chosen were surveyed at this time, in the hope that this would give us enough of an idea as to whether a project would be viable in that region or not. More surveys will be carried out as part of the implementation of pilot projects. The regions chosen for these initial surveys were the following. In each region the languages surveyed are marked by an asterisk (\*).

Ndu, N-W Province: \*Limbum, \*Lam Nso', Yamba, Noni, Oku

Bamilike, West Province: \*Yemba, \*Ghomala, \*Fe'fe'e, Ngyemboong

Mboum-East, Adamouwa Province: \*Karang, Kuo, Nzak Mbay ?, Mbum Mbere ?

Mofu-Gudur, Extreme North Province: \*Mofu, Matal, Zulgo

### Initial Evaluation

Summary sheets of the information obtained for each language surveyed are appended. Overall initial impressions are the following:

- Development on the local level recognize the importance of the MT in oral communication. Most require their village workers to speak the local language.
- There is a lot of good will by development agencies in all regions to integrate some of their activities with adult literacy programs in the MT in order to become more effective in their communication. There is a great need for MT materials on development topics.
- Infrastructures for adult literacy classes differ from language to language. In a given language several infrastructures are already involved or may need to be mobilized; e.g. language/development committees, MINJES, churches, ladies cooperatives etc.
- The Mboum-East region has serious orthography differences between related languages that should be resolved before starting a regional program.
- The Ndu and Bamilike region are both very viable for pilot projects. Both have strong PROPELCA projects in some languages and for extensions or potential extensions in others. Both have a lot of development activities and a good climate for collaboration.
- The Bamilike region shows a lot of local initiative that might be most

effectively harnessed by a team of national literacy specialists, given that they are fully trained.

- The Ndu region has a mixture of projects. Lam Nso with a strong Propelca program as well as a responsive adult literacy infrastructure through the local MINJES center. Limbum is similar to Lam Nso socio-culturally and economically but less developed as far as Propelca and adult literacy is concerned. Yamba, the other key language, is socio-economically different in that it is more remote, with less development. This group experiences a larger drain of educated people to more developed regions. Literacy rates in Yamba villages can be as low as 14%, which is significantly lower than in more developed NW and West Province languages. The Yamba language was not yet surveyed but important data including literacy rates on a number of villages was obtained from a local public health agency.

### Conclusions

The literacy surveys have given us an adequate basis for deciding where to start the first pilot projects. Beyond that they have proven a very useful tool to SIL researchers, and others involved in literacy, to gain insight into the local situation, to make known their work in literacy and to begin a dialogue with local agencies on fruitful collaboration. It has already become clear that the survey methods will be used by other researchers even if the languages concerned will not be included in the proposed pilot projects.

6/25  
12-2-42

## Literacy Survey Summary

Language: Limbum

Dates of survey: Oct 1990

Survey team: Ian CHEFFY & Grace TOH

Questionnaires taken: QI \_\_\_\_\_ 1  
QII \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
QIII \_\_\_\_\_ 7  
QIV \_\_\_\_\_ 24

### Language Development Level

Orthography - settled: Cam. Standard: Yes Problems: Only some small issues remain to be finalised (e.g. position of tone marks on long vowels).

#### Local Leadership:

Language Committee -- constitution: No

regular meetings: 3-4 times per year

subcommittees in region: None

subcommittees outside region: None

contributes financially: few funds

type of literacy activities: focusing on developing R&W among literates at present.

literacy worker(s): no staff

other comments: a small group

#### Materials- R&W book: planned

Primer: Yes

Post primer: No

Cultural: Yes (old orthography)

Religious: Yes (old orthography)

Functional: No

News sheet: No

Yearly calendar/diary: Yes

Other:

No of local authors: None

Local publishing - L1 typists: None

Duplicating: Yes

Simple book making: No

Other:

### MT school and adult literacy structures

Total no of primary schools: 80-100

Propelca - formal: No no. of schools: 0 started when: 0

- informal: Yes no. of schools: 5 started when: 1986

- no. of trained teachers: 3 fully trained, 8 partially trained

#### Adult literacy sponsors:

organizer(s): No full-time: part-time: volunteer:

no. of regular classes for illiterates: 1

no of L2-L1 transition courses/year: 0

Number of L1 readers: 30?

Number of trained L1 literacy instructors: 1

Development agencies

Type	Super- visors	Village workers	Workshop space (YES/NO)	Collaboration potential 1-5 (5=highest)
Public Health	2	14	Yes	5
MINJES	1	1	Yes	3
Social & Women's Affairs	1	1	No	3
Agriculture	4	17	Yes	5
Comm. Development	2+	?	?	5
MINEPIA (animal husbandry)?		?	?	2
Baptist Health Centre	1	2	?	3

Villagers

Literacy rate in remote village: \* more central village:\*\*

Felt needs: agric - need to grow more & better crops (problems of lack of fertiliser, tools, money to pay people to work)  
health - poor food identified as a problem (i.e. unbalanced diet?), also lack of medicine and money to buy it.

Motivation(s) for reading L1

a) for readers of L2:

b) for illiterates

Yes- to read L2: some semiilliterates want to read L2, but not the illiterates so much

- to gain new info through L1 materials:
- to gain simple arithmetic/marketing skills:

Yes- improve self-esteem: by being able to write and receive letters privately.

- others:

\* Several of those interviewed in Luh could read English. I doubt if this was a representative sample of the whole village.

\*\*In Binka, all but one interviewee was totally illiterate. They were all older people.