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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
AFRICAINNE**

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE HARMONIZATION OF SPELLING
IN THE MANDIGU LANGUAGES



CM-1064

MICROFICHE

A consultation of experts was held in Niamey, Niger from the 8th to the 14th November 1979, to study the standardization of Manden orthography and the production of a general Manden Dictionary. Organized by CELHTO upon the recommendations of the Meeting of Directors of National Research Institutes, the consultation was attended by all the five experts invited. Their names figure on the list appended.

The consultation was officially opened on the 8th of November in the CELHTO conference hall in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the representative of the Embassy of Senegal in Niger. Following the opening ceremony, Mr. Bakary COULIBALY was appointed Chairman of the meeting and Mr. Brehima DOUMBIA, Rapporteur.

After each specialist had given an account of the situation of Manden orthography in use in his country, the following agenda was adopted:

I. STANDARDIZATION OF MANDEN ORTHOGRAPHY

1. Transcription of vowels
2. Transcription of consonants
3. Problem of tones
4. Problem of segmentation and elision
5. Punctuation and capitals
6. Problem of a common denomination (mandingue, manding, mandeng?)

II. GENERAL DICTIONARY

The Meeting adopted its final report on the 4th of November 1979 and was officially closed the same day in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Education, two high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation and the representative of the Embassy of Senegal.

I. STANDARDIZATION OF MANDEN ORTHOGRAPHY

(1-2) Transcription of vowels and consonants:

It was agreed that the sign 'n' will be used to express the notion of nasalization of vowels and prenasalization of consonants. The nasal vowel will thus be indicated by adding 'n' after the oral vowel - ex. : i, in: a, an. The prenasalized consonant is written by adding 'n' before the simple consonant, ex.: d, and; t, nt. This 'n' sign remains unchanged in manden orthography before b,p,m,ex. : nburu, (bread); npalan (satchel).

Attention was drawn to the existence of central vowel () in séquéla speech. It will be symbolized with letter 'ü', ex.: t ü (oil), b ü (leaf). The corresponding semivowel will be written - 'w', ex. : bwo (arm).

Various orthographies of the open vowels are in use:

in Mali : é o

in Guinea : é 0

in Senegal : é 0

in Upper Volta and in Ivory Coast: ε ɔ

After a long debate on this question the meeting unanimously agreed on a system based on the Reference African Alphabet adopted at a UNESCO meeting in 1978. The participants expressed the hope that the amended version of this alphabet (c.f. two annexed tables on the African Alphabet and the Manden Alphabet) will be officialized through the intermediary of the OAU and will be used for reference when elaborating a system of writing for the languages in all Member States. CELHTO undertook to make all necessary arrangements for the diffusion and correct application of the decisions of this meeting.

The adoption of the Reference African Alphabet helped to easily solve the problem of the writing of consonants. It was particularly decided that the palatal forms (mute, voiced and nasal) and the mute "hushing" sound should not be transcribed with the use of diagraphs.

III. THE PROBLEM OF TONES

The participants stressed the importance and relevance of tones in the varieties of Manden language and expresses the hope that a practical method of standardizing their markings will be set up. Although tones may sometimes be dispensed with in texts for new-literates written for native speakers of the language, this cannot apply in texts for non-native speakers and in the latter case the marking of tones is compulsory.

The meeting proposed the diffusion of the system below for testing in various countries. This system follows three rules:

1. The Rule of succession of tones:

Since Manden tones appear, in most words, in rising order (low and high pitch, rising and falling pitch movements) only the first high tones will be marked on each word. The tones that follow are all high whilst the preceding tones are all low.

A word comprising only low tones bears no tonal marking. If all the tones are high the word bears an acute accent on its first syllable:

yūryūyurugu
zigizaga
sinikēz

yuruguyurugu
zigizaga
sinik ēz

2. The Rule of non-succession of tones

In the rare words that do not follow the rules set forth above, all tones are indicated; the high tone is marked with an acute accent and the low tone with a grave accent.

Ex. : sisa
 sabū
 mānā
 kānā
 kojūgù

3. The Rule of Tonal Contrast

The definite substantive is characterized by the fact that

it always bears, in addition to the modulated tone on its last syllable, at least two different types of tones. To identify the definite substantive it will suffice to stress the presence of these two tones. Once identified a modulated tone is marked on its last syllable; it is thus not necessary to use a new sign in transcribing this tone. This rule of succession of tones (rules always observed with the substantifs) calls for a doubling of the vowels in the definite mono-syllabic substantives and makes it possible to use just the acute accent to transcribe the modulated tone.

Ex. Diagram 1

sóó	soo
disi	disi
saraka	saraka
kulukulú	kulukulu
fitiriwale	fitiriwale

Diagram 2

sòó	soo
sàgá	saga
sàbará	sabara
dògòdògònin	dogodogonin

Diagram 3

jabibi	jabibi
funténi	funteni
jàkumá	jakuma
júkúnán	jukunan

Diagram 4

dóóndòli	don-doli
kùrùkùrù	kuru-duru
fógófogo	fogo-fogo
sùrukùbòò, kálamán	sùruku-boo, kalaman

The systems introduced above (see appendix, table 3) was considered perfectly valid for the jula spoken in Upper Volta and that of Ivory Coast. The researcher from Mali having pointed out that a Malian-tone specialist (Mr. Boubakar Diarra) has elaborated a very similar tone system, the meeting urged CELHTO to arrange a meeting between, Mr. Boukary COULIBALY and Mr. Boubakar Diarra with a view to helping both specialists to set up one and the same system to be proposed to the OAU Member States.

4. Problem of Segmentation

The meeting decided to debate the points below in the following order:

- (a) derivatives
- (b) verbal forms
- (c) nominal forms and postpositions
- (d) emphatics
- (e) disjunctives or distributives
- (f) interrogatives
- (g) compound forms and syntagmes.

(a) Derivatives:

It was decided that these should be written attached (prefixed or suffixed) to the root word as required.

1. endocentric derivation:

- lá' ; nín' ; ya' ; ka'
 - má' ; bá' ; t' ; nan
 - má' ; ntán' ;

2. exocentric derivation

- ya' ; bága' ; tá'
 - man' ; bali' ; len'
 - li' ; lan' ; la'

b) Verbal forms:

The prefixed forms are written detached from the verbal root. These forms are: yé, bé, te, ná, téna, bená, maná, kána,

Ex.: a vé báara kɛ.

The suffixed forms are written attached to the verbal root. These forms are: lá, rá or na according to the context and 'n n' in malinke. Ex.: a táara ; a nan n

c) Nominal forms:

Both the morpheme - o - denoting determination in malinke and the 'pluralizer' are affixed to the nominal root.

EX.: cɔo ; muso^o
mɔgɔlu - m^ogɔwu.

The postpositions are not attached to the nominal form.

Ex.: a bé sírs kán

d) Emphatic forms:

They are written separately.

Ex.: ale dé nana
musó nana de

e) Disjunctives or distributives:

Those are also written separately.

Ex.: mɔgɔ o mɔgɔ
a nana wa a má na wa.

f) Interrogatives:

They are written separately.

Ex.: j n nańá? a ko di ?

g) Compound words and syntagmes:

The criteria adopted is that of tonal compactness. In cases of tonal compactness the parts of the word involved are transcribed attached:

Ex.: numukɛ cɔjan.

If there is no tonal compactness there are two possible solutions:

1. When the syntagme expresses a concept, a hyphen is inserted between its components:
Ex.: sūruku-boc kálama.

2. When the syntagme expresses two concepts, its components are written separately:
Ex.: musó ka fini' ; ka *musó ka* *fini'*
The reduplicative verbs are written separately.
Ex.: ka boli boli.

The elided vowel is replaced by an apostrophe, the remaining vowel behaves as in a language which has tones that are formed by a combination of the tone of an elided vowel and that of an unelided vowel.

Ex.: a be' a fɛ, a b'a' fɛ.

5. Punctuation and Capital Letters

- a. Punctuation: is the same as in French and English.
- b. Capitals: the same as in French and English with the following exceptions:

ɛ becomes ɛ
 ɔ ɔ
 ɔ ɔ
 ɔ ɔ
 ɔ ɔ

6. The Problem of Denomination

After a long discussion, the term "manden" was adopted to indicate the family of language traditionally called "mandingue, manding or mandeng".

II. THE PROBLEM OF PRODUCING A DICTIONARY

It was decided that a manden dictionary should be compiled and translated into French and English. Each state is entrusted with compiling that part of the dictionary relating to it. All the work done on this dictionary will be submitted to a team responsible for synthesizing it and deciding whether two dictionaries, Manden-French and Manden-English or just one, Manden-French-English should be produced.

ALPHABET AFRICAINE

(de reference)

a a b b c c d d d d d e e e
 f f g g h h h i j k k l m n n
 o o p q q r r s s s t t t t t
 u u v v w x x y y z z z z z

en ordre phonologique :

voyelles

i I e e a a o o u u ə

plosives

p b t d k g q x
 b d y k t t d t d

(plosives ou affriquées)

c j

nasales

m n ŋ

fricatives

f v θ ð s z ʃ ʒ
 s z x ɣ h h c

liquides

r f l

semi-voyelles

w y

clicks

ɘ ɠ Ɂ

MANDEN ALPHABET
(Reference Alphabet).

a	b	c	d	e	ɛ	f	gl	gb	ɣ
h	i	j	k	kp	l	n	n	ɣ	ɣ
o	ɔ	p	r	s	t	ʃ	ʊ	u	v
w	w	x	y	ɣ					

In phonological order:

Vowels: i e ɛ ɔ o u

Plosives: p b t d k g kp gb

Plosives or affricates: c j

Nasalized forms: m n

Fricatives: f v s z x ɣ h


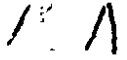
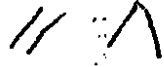
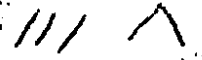
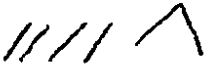


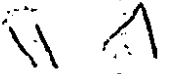

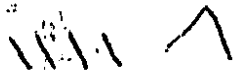
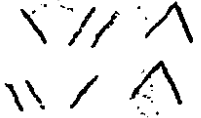
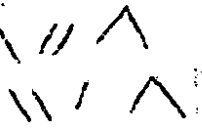



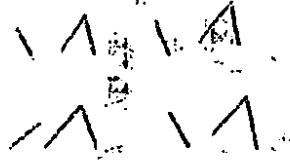
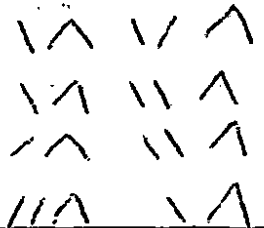
Liquid consonants: r l

Semivowels: w w y

1. The manden alphabet has two new letters: 'u' and 'w'

They are not in the source African Alphabet.

TABLE OF TONAL DIAGRAMS FOR DEFINITE SUBSTANTIVES

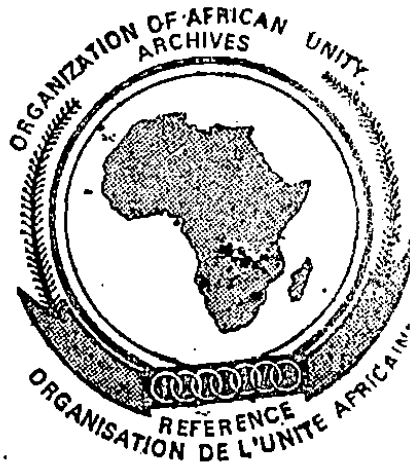
	Mono-Syllables	Bi-syllables	Trisyllables	Quadrisyllables	More than four syllables
1					
2					
3					
4					

N.B. The line below the signs indicates that the tones appear on long vowels.

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