

Peace Corps

Mende Language Manual Sierra Leone



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The task of updating this manual has been a herculean one. We found ourselves engaged in writing a new manual kind of, other than merely updating an existing one. However, it has been a wonderful experience.

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Finally we thank all those, who, in one way or the other contributed to the successful completion of this manual.

Whatever shortcomings that show up in this piece of work will be purely our responsibility. We are however hopeful that it will serve as a useful resource material for the United States Peace Corps Volunteers in Sierra Leone who will need to learn Mende.

Alhaji Sheik Kuyateh
Frederick Conteh
1989

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this updated manual is to enable Peace Corps Volunteers in Sierra Leone to interact freely with the community in which they find themselves. One communicates and socializes through language; knowing the language and culture of a group of people is becoming part of those people. The Mende manual is specifically designed for those who will work in Mende-speaking areas. In order to acquire some proficiency in the language, the 'Brewster Method' should supplement these information.

This manual provides a more functional knowledge in both language and culture, for all Volunteers. It therefore focuses on all Peace Corps Volunteer occupations. It will also help Volunteers to work effectively with the local community.

Mende has two real dialects; Kpàà Mende spoken predominantly in the Moyamba District and in small areas in the Bo and Kenema Districts. The other dialect is the Koo Mende spoken mainly in the Kenema, Kailahun and Kono Districts. Mende speakers in the Pujehun District are referred to as the 'Wanjama' people, but this is no real dialect of mende. A big river runs through this area called 'Wanjei'. Their Mende is no less than that of the Koo.

Since much of the lexical and phonological variations in Kpàà are now giving way to the Koo system, we realize that modern spoken Mende is similar also to the Koo system. Koo Mende then has become mutually intelligible for all Mende speakers in Sierra Leone. Koo then is the dominant dialect in this manual.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE TRIBE

(Ref: Sierra Leone History from AD 1000 to present day - pamphlet - 1984, S.M. Koroma)

The Mendes are said to be the largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. They are descendants of the Mane who were invaders. They arrived in Sierra Leone around 1550. They occupy the Southern and Eastern Provinces which is about 1/3 of the total surface area of Sierra Leone. The two Provinces comprise Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kenema and Kalahun Districts. These people have a rich cultural and linguistic characteristics which help to mark them off as a distinct group in Sierra Leone.

There are about three sub-divisions of the Mende group.

- A) Kpa (Gba) - These are found in the Moyamba and Bo Districts and part of Kenema District. They are very unique in their unflinching support and membership of the 'Wonde' secret society. They are renowned for their strong military traditions and those in Moyamba District particularly have a distinct dialect - Kpàà (Gba) different.
- B) Sewa Mende - They live near and along the Sewa river commonly referred to as 'middle' Mende because they occupy a middle position between the Kpàà and the Koo - Bo, Kenema, Pujehun. They look upon themselves as the purest Mende speaking group.
- C) Koo Mende - They are largely muslims and they regard themselves as the most knowledgeable and learned. They are found in the Kenema and Kailahun Districts.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

These people have great regards and respect for the institution of chieftaincy. 'Ndomahei' (Paramount Chief) has wide ranging powers although with colonial rule and independence these powers have been considerably undermined and eroded. Before colonial rule, the Mahei (Chief) was King in his own right and was accorded all the powers befitting his supreme title. Warfare was a common factor for acquiring Chieftaincy or Kingship which implied that the King was usually the chief warrior. Today Paramount Chiefs are elected by tribal authorities.

The Mendés have a rich cultural heritage. They are rich in traditional music and folklore, with a powerful display in artistry - carving and weaving. They preserve their tradition in their secret societies. These societies play a very vital role in thier lives. There is the Poro and Wonde for men; Sande or Bondo for women; Njayeí and humoi for both sexes.

They are predominantly farmers as they hail from areas which have rich and fertile soil for farming. They produce the major cash crops in the country. They farm in crops like rice - the staple food in Sierra Leone - cocoa, coffee, ginger, cassava, groundnuts and vegetables. Even educated Mendés are farmers of these products. Kenema and Kailahun Districts are rich in crops like cocoa and coffee. Fishing and hunting for game are also their pastime activities. They also exploit oil palm for oil and kernels.

Although connected to Islam and Christianity, the Mendes are mostly animist with strong belief in the worship of ancestors and in witchcraft and sorcery. They have a strong belief that actions of the living are largely influenced and conditioned by dead ancestors.

MENDE ORTHOGRAPHY

Consonants

b	-	Bafa	-	hut	p	-	pale	-	house
d	-	dawa	-	leaf	t	-	tse	-	fowl
f	-	folo	-	sun	v	-	vonu	-	last year
g	-	genda	-	morning	k	-	kali	-	hoe
gb	-	gbale	-	hurt	kp	-	kpate	-	make
h	-	haku	-	tortoise	j	-	jaka	-	male lizard
l	-	loli	-	dance	n	-	navo	-	money
m	-	maana	-	plantain	w	-	wala	-	wooden state
mb	-	mba	-	rice	nd	-	ndamba	-	crocodile
ng	-	ngali	-	thorn	nj	-	nja	-	water
ny	-	nyani	-	spoil	ŋ	-	ŋama	-	blood
s	-	sani	-	bottle	y	-	yabasi	-	onion

Vowels

Mende has seven vowels

i	-	ndili	-	housefly
e	-	tewe	-	cut
ɛ	-	mehe	-	food
a	-	paa	-	kill
ɔ	-	holo	-	sew
o	-	tolo	-	kolanut
u	-	bulu	-	horn

Long vowels should be doubled in writing.

E.g.:

paa	-	kill
kpaa	-	farm
loolu	-	five
puu	-	ten
fajii	-	the bucket

Note:

1. The name of each letter of the alphabet will be its sound i.e. Phonic Articulation will be used.
2. A final n to indicate the nasal sound will be indicated; e.g. Makatihun, kpaahun, kishun.

3. Nasal combinations like nd, ny, mb and the labio-velar sounds kp and gb should be articulated as single sounds.

E.g.: Kpale - pain Gbembe - board
 Hdovo - frog Nyoko - sugar cane
 Ngoto - waist

4. It should be noted that ŋ which is the final sounds in English words like sing, morning, and going can occur in initial and final positions in Mende.

E.g.: ŋoni - Bird
 ŋama - Blood
 Polonŋ - Far
 Gbuŋ - Heavy falling sound

NUMERALS

The following numerals are used in counting.

Ita	- One
Fele	- Two
Sawa	- Three
Naani	- Four
Loolu	- Five
Weita	- Six
Wofla	- Seven
Wayakpa	- Eight
Taalu	- Nine
Puu	- Ten
Puu mahun yila	- Eleven
Numu gboyongo	- Twenty
Numu gboyongo mahun puu	- Thirty
Numu fele gboyongo	- Forty
Numu fele gboyongo mahun puu	- Fifty
Numu sawa gboyongo	- Sixty
Numu sawa gboyongo mahun puu	- Seventy
Numu naani gboyongo	- Eighty
Numu naani gboyongo mahun puu	- Ninety
Hondo yila	- One hundred
Tausi yila	- One thousand

Ngila (mutated form - yila) - one

Ita - used only in counting.

Ordinals

Haala - first
Yeso - first

Ngila, haala and yeso do not have the same grammatical distribution.

E.g.: Senti yila ve mbe - Give me one cent
Haala Pisko lo - This is the first Peace Corps
Nya yeso ngi wana - I came first

When ngila occurs with the prefix 'ye' - it means 'one of' as in:

Yengila wu bagihun - Put one of them in the bag
Yengila be ii nya yeya - I don't have anyone

Note: Yilakpe (mutated form - yakpe)

Yakpe mia nya yeya - I have only one

'Haala' can take the agentive singular and plural markers.

Haalamui lo pce bu
Haalablaa ti fonga
Haalableisia ti kpele yeyanga

The suffix - ngo occurs with the numerals fele to wayakpa.

Ti loolungo ti waa
Ti wayakpango tia bi

-ngo is also contracted with fele and sawa to fengo and sango respectively.

Fengo yeya
Sango majia
Bi li lo a fengo?

Ngila, fengo and sango are the only numerals whose initial consonants can be mutated.

Ngila - yila
Fengo - vengo
Sango - jango

Mu jango muli maa Bo
Ti vengo lo mbi
Ndo yila mia ngi yeya

When the suffix kpe is added to yila, fele and sawa they mean - only.

I ngeyani yakpe
Mu sawakpe mia mu li ni Bo
Ti felekpe mia ti nje ti le ni

When nouns are enumerated they do not take plural markers.

Mbala puu mia mu ngeya ni
Nyaha loolu mia mahei Buake yeya
Nya go a mita fele

TONE

Tone is a very important feature of African languages. It is a distinctive feature because a change in tone on the same lexical item brings about a change in meaning.

Mende has two different tones; high and low.

High Tone

Ndé - say it
Hélé - elephant
Lá - lie down

Low Tone

Bòlò - hat/cap
Mbùlù - intestine
Hè - blessing

There are also phonetic glides from low to high and high to low where two vowels with different tones come together without an intervening consonant.

Rising Glide

Tèi - The fowl/chicken
Ngùí - The head
Sèlèí - The banana

Falling Glide

Ngíl - I not
(neg. pron)
Hóndóè
Búkúi - Book

Examples of words distinguished from each other according to their tones.

Ndòli - Hook	Ndóli - Dance
Káli - Hoe	Kàli - Snake
Mbówó - Clay	Mbòw - To fly

The meaning of certain sentences is determined by tone (intonation).

Bèc li?	Won't you go?
Bèc li	You can't go.

Máá biá miá mù limá.	We are going together
Máá bià mià mú limá?	Are we going together?

LESSON ONE

BASIC GREETINGS

Cultural Explanation

When the child begins to talk, he grows up by learning to greet everyone in the house every morning after washing his face. It becomes part of the child as a custom to greet elders every morning and at other times of the day. The child should first greet the elder.

In typical Mende homes, women greet their husbands by kneeling down which shows a sign of respect and honour. Greetings are sometimes followed by shaking of the hands which shows sign of intimacy or friendship (affection). Greetings also show a sign of respect and a display of good manners.

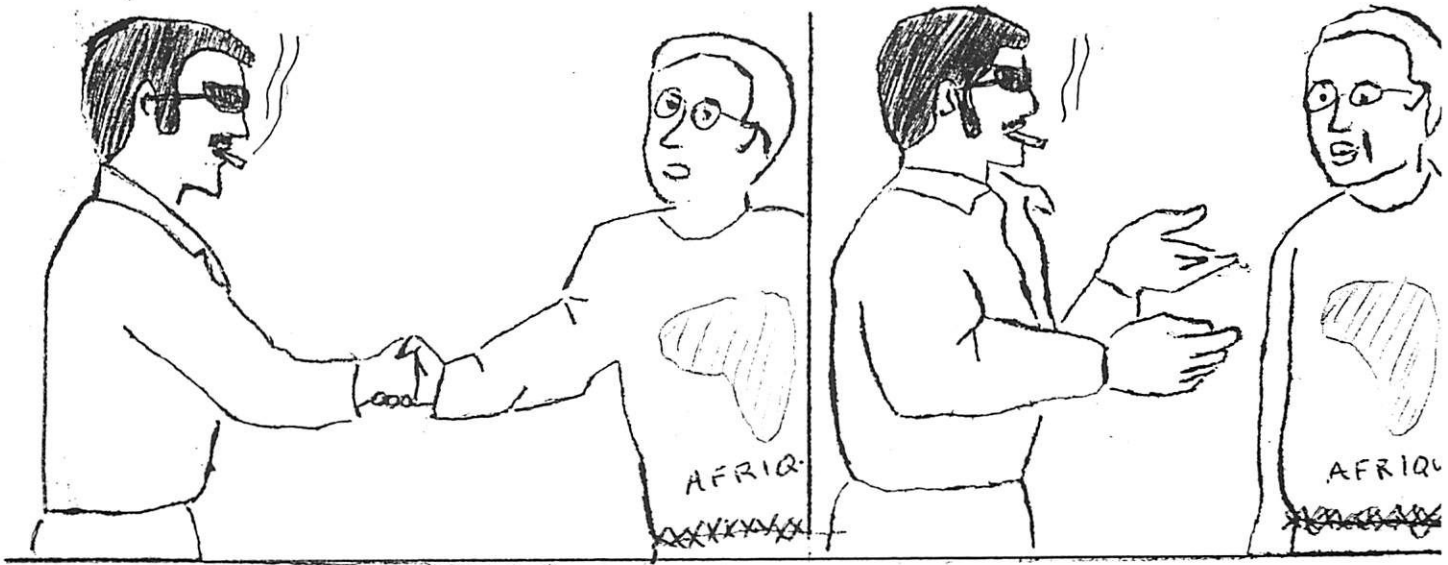
Immense use is made of titles in the language. This is mostly based on age and position in society. Therefore due regards is given to these titles when greeting people.

DIALOGUE

- PCV: Ndiama, buwaa - Hello, friend
LH: Mm, buwaa, bi sic - Hello
- PCV: Gboɔ bi ngahun? - How are you?
LH: Kaye ii Ngewo ma, ɔ biabee? - I'm well, and you?
- PCV: Nya bɛɛ kaye ii Ngewo ma - I'm well too
LH: Ke malo boma. - See you again
- PCV: E-ye malo hoe - O.k. we shall see

Alternate Forms

- Kahuin ye na? - How are you?
Nya ngahun gbuango - I'm well
Oo bi waa - Hello (answering a greeting)
Mm, ke ta mia - O.k. we shall see



Useful Expressions

Ngenda tetei	-	Early morning
Ngendei	-	Morning
Folihun	-	Afternoon
Kpoko voe	-	Evening
Fitiima	-	Twilight
Kpindi	-	Night
Ngewohuin	-	Dawn

Literal Translation

Meaning

Buwaa	-	Have you come	Hello/good morning
Bia na	-	Are you there	Good afternoon
Buuvaa	-	Did you spend the day	Good evening
Mu kpoko	-	Good night	Good night
Mua loo sina	-	We see tomorrow	See you tomorrow

Substitution Drill

Trainer's Cue

Trainee's Cue

Ndiamo	-	Friend	Ndiamo buwaa
Ngɔ	-	Elder brother/sister	
Ndake	-	Male contemporary	
Nyande	-	Male/female contemporary	
Nyapoi	-	Lady	
Maada	-	Grandfather / Paramount Chief	
Mama	-	Grandmother	
Keke	-	Father	
Yie	-	Mother	
Kenya	-	Uncle	
Kinii	-	Youngman	
Mahei	-	Chief	
Ndo Mahei	-	Paramount Chief	

Chief Enters

PCV:	Mahei buwaa	Hello chief
Chief:	Mm ndiamo bi waa bi sie, mu gewoo	Hello friend, have seat
PCV:	Mahei, ngi waa lo Ko mua bie mu gooma	Chief, I have come to get myself acquainted with you
Chief:	Bi lei?	What's your name?
PCV:	Nya laa _____ Pisko mia a nge	My name is _____ I am a Peace Corps Volunteer
Chief:	Bi gbua milo?	Where are you coming from?
PCV:	Ngi gbua Ameika lo nya longo ngi hei bi lei jahun ko mua weni mu yaa kpaa yengei we	I'm coming from America. I want to stay in your village so that we can farm together
Chief:	Na nyandegoi. Nga pielo nya bondeisia ti mago	That's good. I'll let my people know about it
PCV:	Mahei fama loo woo gbe bi va	Chief, here is a small gift for you
Chief:	Ee, moi bi sic, Ngewo i ndo nya nemahun	O.k. thank you youngman, let me live to remember it through God's will
PCV:	Kc ngi ya lo pecla	Then I'm going home
Chief:	E-ye mua gbla	O.k. see you

NOUNS

Indefinite and Definite Forms

Definiteness and number are functionally related, for the language does not only have definite singular forms but also definite and indefinite singular and plural forms. The indefinite form of a noun is simply that which does not have a definite marker.

The most common definite marker is the suffix i

Indefinite Singular Form

Hele - Elephant
 Pele - House
 Ndopo - Child
 Sani - Bottle
 Bulu - Horn
 Bolu - Hat

Definite Singular Form

Helei - The Elephant
 Pelei - " house
 Ndopoi - " child
 Sani - " bottle
 Bului - " horn
 Bolui - " hat

There are a few exceptions to this pattern.

- i) When the definite singular marker i is suffixed to a word ending in a the a is replaced by e/ε.

E.g.: Indefinite Singular

Mba - Rice
 Haa - Death

Definite Singular

Mbei - The rice
 Haei - The death

- ii) A few nouns have their final vowels lengthened or their definite form.

Indefinite Singular

Meme - Mirror
 Ndola - Baby
 Kaga - Box

Definite Singular

Memee - The mirror
 Ndolaa - The baby
 Kagaa - The box

NUMBER

The most frequently occurring plural markers are ngaa the indefinite plural marker, and only suffixed to indefinite forms of nouns; and sia suffixed to definite forms only.

Indefinite Singular

Maha - Chief
 Ndili - Housefly
 Hele - Elephant
 Ndopo - Child

Indefinite Plural

Mahangaa - Chiefs
 Ndilingaa - Houseflies
 Helengaa - Elephants
 Ndopongaa - Children

Definite Plural

Mahangeisia - The chiefs	also	Maheisia - The chiefs
Ndiligeisia - The houseflies	"	Ndilisia - The houseflies
Helengeisia - The elephants	"	Heleisia - The elephants
Ndopoisia - The children		

Ni

Ni is another plural marker, and it occurs only with personal pronouns, and in folklore, with the names of animal characters. It means and others or groups.

Sualeni	Swaray and others
Isani	Issa and others
Doktani ti ya Salon.	Doctor and others have gone to Freetown

When ni is used with the pronouns mua, wua, and tia, it has flattering, derogatory or arrogant connotation.

Wuani we luwa	People like you don't fear
Tiani te nafa	People like them cannot prosper

Note that a noun takes the definite singular marker i before the definite plural marker. Pronouns can take the definite plural suffix, sia.

Wuanisia wu mche yana	- That is not food for people like you
Muanisia mue jia goi	- People like us don't offend others

THE AGENTIVE FORM

Mo and its corresponding plural markers blaa and bleisia are roughly equivalent to English er and ers.

Ngenge - Work	Ngengemo - Worker (Indefinite singular)
Mc - Eat	Memo - Eater (Indefinite singular)
Pie - Do	Piemo - Doer (Indefinite singular)

Ngengemoi	- The worker (Definite singular)
Memoi	- The eater (Definite singular)
Piemoi	- The doer (Definite singular)

Ngengeblaa	- Workers (Indefinite plural)
Mcblaa	- Eaters (Indefinite plural)
Pieblaa	- Doers (Indefinite plural)

Ngengebleisia	- The workers (Definite plural)
Mcbleisia	- The eaters (Definite plural)
Piebleisia	- The doers (Definite plural)

Ngengemoi waa mche yimoi gama	- The worker has come to the cook.
Pec loblaa lo mia	- The house builders are there
Ti humableisia hounga	- They have caught the thieves

PRONOUNS

Pronouns in Mende may be confusing because the form of certain pronouns varies with the aspect or tense of the verb with which they occur; whether the sentence is positive or negative.

The labels of the various sub-categories of pronouns are only convenient labels, meant to serve self explanatory purposes. The different categories will be treated as we advance with our dialogues.

Personal Pronouns

Positive Forms

Nya - 1st per sing - I
Bia - 2nd per sing - You
Ta - 3rd per sing - He/she/
it
Mua - 1st per plu - We
Wua - 2nd per plu - You
Tia - 3rd per plu - They

Negative Forms

Ngii + ii = ngii - I not
Bii + ii = bii - You not
I + ii = ii - He/she/it
not
Muu + ii = muu - We not
Wuu + ii = wuu - You not
Tii + ii = tii - They not

Note: The negative forms occur with the negative particle ii; one i sound is elided and the other contracted with the pronouns. The contracted forms are therefore the negative pronouns.

Positive Expression

1. Nya lima Bo - I am going to Bo
2. Bia lima Bo - You are going to Bo
3. Ta lima Bo - He/she is going to Bo
4. Mua lima Bo - We are going to Bo
5. Wua lima Bo - You are going to Bo
6. Tia lima Bo - They are going to Bo

Negative Expression

1. Ngii lima Bo - I'm not going to Bo
2. Bii lima Bo - You are not going to Bo
3. Ii lima Bo - He is not going to Bo
4. Muu lima Bo - We are not going to Bo
5. Wuu lima Bo - You are not going to Bo
6. Tii lima Bo - They are not going to Bo

HABITUAL/FUTURE/PRONOUNS

They occur with verbs referring to habitual or future activity, but this largely depends on the situation of the utterance and/or the addition of time element.

Positive Forms

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Nga kpaá yengei lo we | - I do farm work |
| 2. Nga mbei mee | - I eat rice |
| 3. Ba tisa yengei lo we | - You do a teaching work |
| 4. A ndowei boó | - He digs a hole |
| 5. Ma dodei mee | - We eat pig |
| 6. Wa kpetei laa | - You make swamp |
| 7. Ta hale yengei lo we | - They do health word |

Negative Forms - Occur with verb stems

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Nge kpaá yenge we | - I don't do farm work |
| 2. Nge mba me | - I don't eat rice |
| 3. Be tisa yenge we | - You don't do teaching work |
| 4. E ndowa bo | - He does not dig a hole |
| 5. Mue ndode me | - We don't eat pig |
| 6. Wue kpete la | - You don't make swamp |
| 7. Te hale yenge we | - They don't do health work |

Future Uses

Positive Expression

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Nga mbei me lo sina | - I shall eat rice tomorrow |
| 2. Nga walo | - I shall come |
| 3. Ta kpiti hawalo wei | - The will brush the grass sometime during the day |

Negative Expression

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Nge mba me sina | - I will not eat rice tomorrow |
| 2. Nge wa | - I shall not come |
| 3. Te kpiti hawa wei | - They will not brush the grass |

OBJECT PRONOUNS

These always occur with the preposition a which invariably precedes them. One can also call them a-pronouns. They never occur as subjects.

Forms

Nge	-	Me
Bie	-	You
Ngie	-	Her/Him
Mue	-	Us
Wue	-	You
Tie	-	Them

Ya, Ni - Negative Markers

Positive Expression

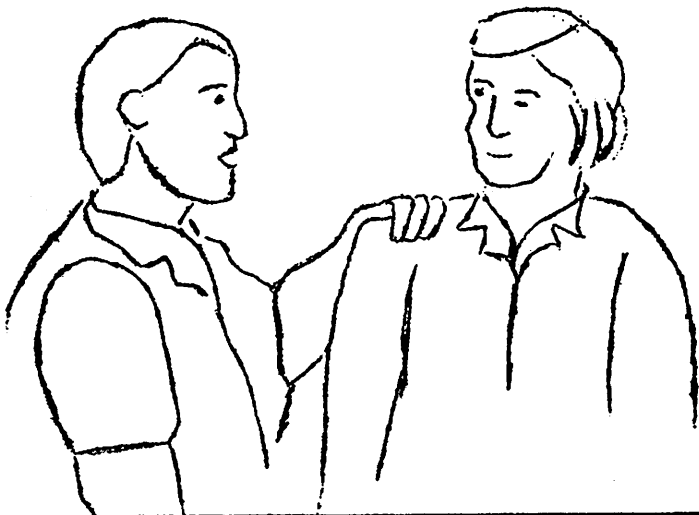
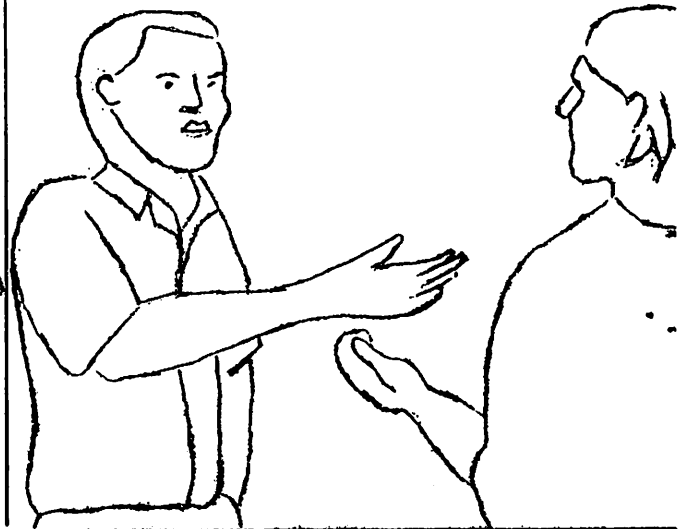
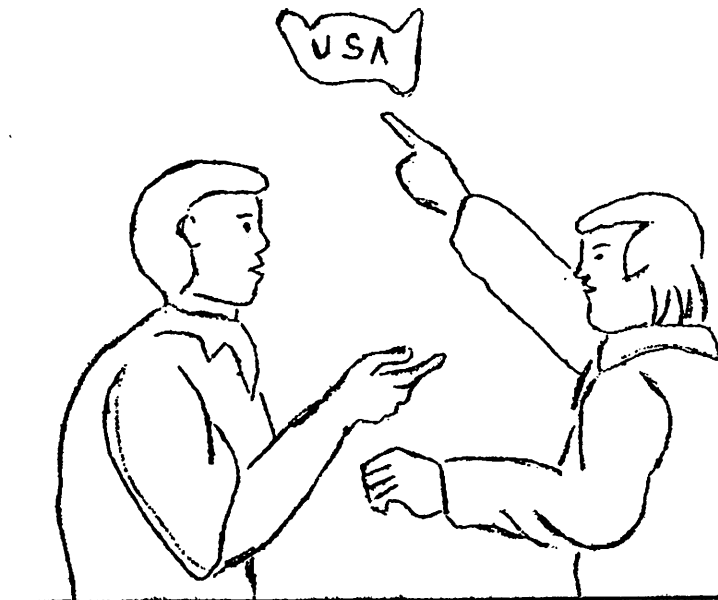
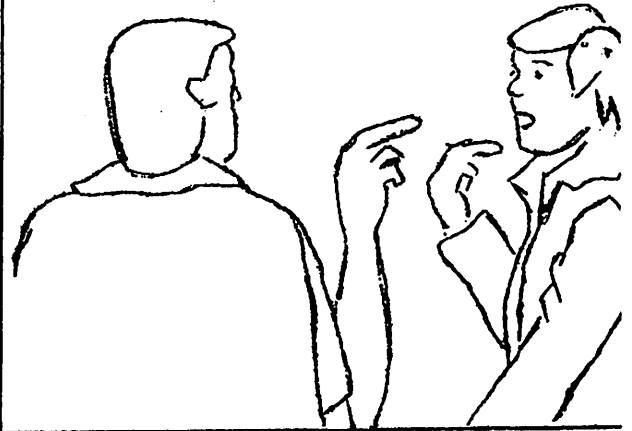
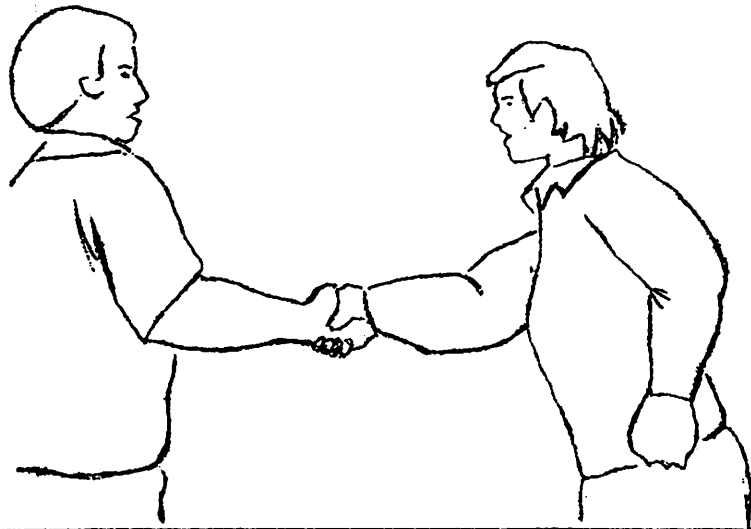
1. Hindo lo a nge - I am a man
2. Gbe bi longo a tie? - Why do you like them
3. A na we a mue - Do that to us
4. Yo a ngie? - Who is he?

Negative Expression

1. Hindo yaa a nge - I am not a man
2. Gbe bi loni a tie? - Why don't you like them
3. Waa na we a mue - Don't do that to us

The third person singular ngie refers only to human nouns. Its variant form la refers to non-human nouns and to human nouns if the latter has been previously mentioned or the listener knows the noun it refers to.

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Nya longo la | - | I like it |
| Nya longo a ngie | - | I love him |
| Nyapoi na nya longo la | - | That woman I like her |



LESSON THREE

INTRODUCING ONESELF

Cultural Explanation

The Mendes are friendly people and therefore very searching. They like to know other people's identity when creating cordial relationships. This enhances better understanding, shows interest and friendship.

DIALOGUE

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| PCV: Ndake bia naa | Afternoon friend |
| LH: Mm bi sie, kahuin yena? | Hi, how are you? |
| PCV: Nya ngahun gbuango | I'm quite well |
| LH: Bi lei? | What is your name? |
| PCV: Nya laa ___ Pisko mia | My name is ___ I am a |
| a nge | Peace Corps Volunteer |
| LH: Bi gbua mi lo? | Where do you come from? |
| PCV: Ngi gbua Ameika lo | I come from America |
| LH: Bi vui ya kolc? | How old are your? |
| PCV: Nya vui ya fo numugbo- | I am twenty four years |
| yongc mahun naani | old |
| LH: Ba gbc yenge lo we? | What work do you do? |
| PCV: Nga hale yengei lo we | I am a health worker |
| LH: Mi gbe mia bi wei ndoc | When did you come to this |
| jihun? | country? |
| PCV: Nge wei agawuinahun | I came last month |
| lo i gbayonga | Thanks, see you then |
| LH: Bi sie, ke malc | |
| PCV: E-ye | O.k. |

Alternate Forms

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Bi biyei? | What is your name? |
| Bi ye gbua? | Where are you coming from? |
| | Where do you come from? |
| Gbc yenge mia ba pie | What work do you do? |

Useful Expressions

Nya laa _____ My name is Nya laa yana a - My name is not
Bi laa _____ Your name is Nya laa yaa My name is not
Ngi laa _____ His/her name is
Mu laa _____ Our name is
Wu laa _____ Your name is
Ti laa _____ Their name is

Dokta mia a nge - I am a doctor
Tisa mia a bie - You are a teacher
Kpaa la moi mia a bie - You are a farmer

Dokta ya a nge - I am not a doctor
Tisa ya a bie - You are not a teacher
Kpaa la mo ya a bie - You are not a farmer

Huan mahun gbe mo mia - I am in the Parks/ I am a
a nge Parks worker
Tisa mia a ngie - He is a teacher

Huan mahun gbe mo ya - I am not a Parks worker
a nge - He is not a teacher
Tisa ya a ngie

I gbua mi lo? - Where is he/she coming
 from?
Bi maa mi lo? - Where are you going to?
Ngi ma teihun lo - I am going to town

Substitution Drill

A. Kabala Ngi gbia Amcika lo
 Bo
 Kenema Ngi lima teihun lo
 Salon - Freetown/Sierra Leone
 Makeni
 Kono
 Teihun - Town
 Sukuihun - School
 Kpaahun - Farm
 Haiwebu - Hospital
 Ndoweihun - Market day

B. Kpaa Nga hale yengei lo we
 Tisa
 Dokta
 Nye make
 Huan mahun gbe
 Nja lowa bo
 Latii bo

LH: Bi ndegaa ti lolɔ?	How many brothers and sisters have you?
Stiv: Nya ndegaa ti naani hingaa ti fele ke nya-hangaa ti fele	I have four, two brothers and two sisters
LH: Bi ndegaa kpɛɛ ta li lo suku?	Do all of them go to school?
Stiv: Nya nde nyahangaa sia le lima suku. Nya nde hingaa tia ti kpoyɔa a sukui, tia na yenge ma	My sisters are still attending school. My brothers have finished school, they are now working
LH: Ke bi sie hoe	Thank you then
Stiv: E-ye ke malo	O.k. see you

Useful Expressions

Bi nde lo	This is a brother to you
Bi ndii lo	This is your brother
Bi nde nyahan lolɔ	This is a sister to you
Bi nde nyahanloi lo	This is your sister
Bi nde hindɔ lo	This is a brother to you
Bi nde hindoi lo	This is your brother
Bi keke	Your father
Bi nje	Your mother
Bi kenya	Your uncle

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Nya	-	My
Bi	-	Your
Ngi	-	His/hers/its
Mu	-	Our
Wu	-	Your
Ti	-	Their
Nya lomei nohongo	-	My shirt is dirty
Nya lomei ii nohoni	-	My shirt is not dirty
Bi ndei lo	-	This is your brother
Bi nde ya ji	-	This is not your brother
Ngi keke ya teihun	-	His father has gone to town
Ngi keke ii li ni teihun	-	His father did not go to town
Ti leihun ya sewesewe	-	Their town is clean
Ti leihun ii sewesewei	-	Their town is not clean
Mu gbaa lo	-	This is our farm
Mu gbaa ya ji	-	This is not our farm

Wu loiblaa ti waa - Your dancers have come
 Wu loiblaa ti ya wei - Your dancers have not come

If the possessed noun is plural the third person plural past pronoun ti occurs between it and the verb.

Nya yengeblesia ti hawango - My workers are lazy
 Bi nyapoisia ti lole? - How many girl friends have you?

All possessive pronouns can occur with nda which means own.

Nya nda lomei lo - This is my own shirt
 Nya nda lomei ya ji - This is not my own shirt
 O bi nda gowe? - Where is your own shoe?
 Wu nda kopɔ̃ ii na - Your own money is not there

When a possessive pronoun and nda occur without an overtly expressed noun, nda can take the definite singular and plural markers i and sia.

Nya ndei ve - Give me mine
 Bi ndeisiaa mi? - Where are yours?

If however a noun is overtly expressed it takes the definite singular and plural markers.

Bi nda nyapoi ii loni a bie - Your own girlfriend does not love you
 Ngi nda huangaa ti mumungo - His animals are very small
 Ti ti nda beleisia hongga - They have sewn their own trousers

Interrogative Pronouns

These are:

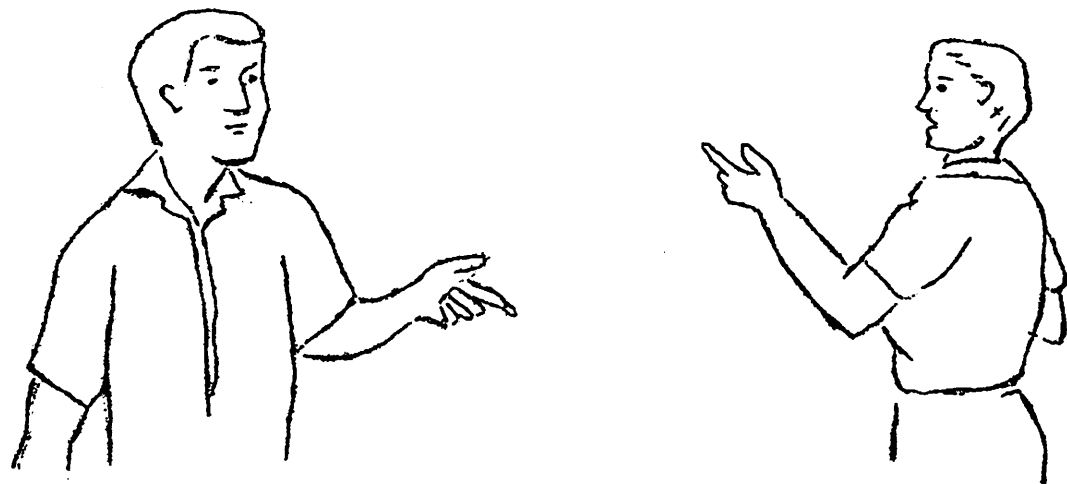
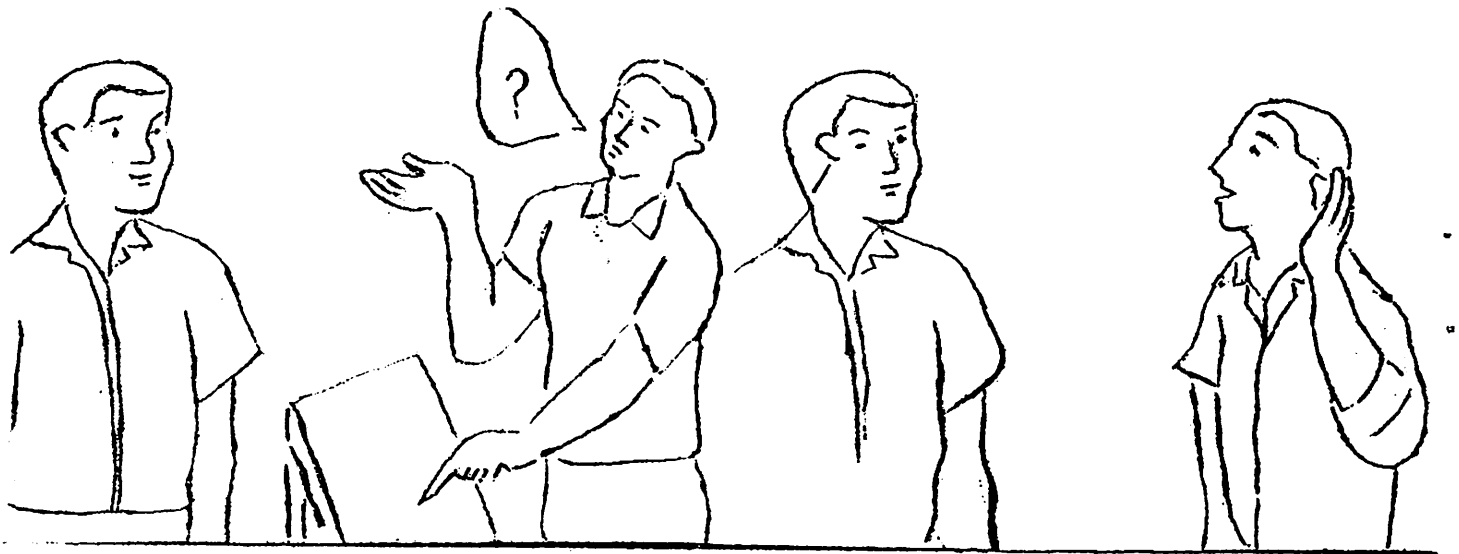
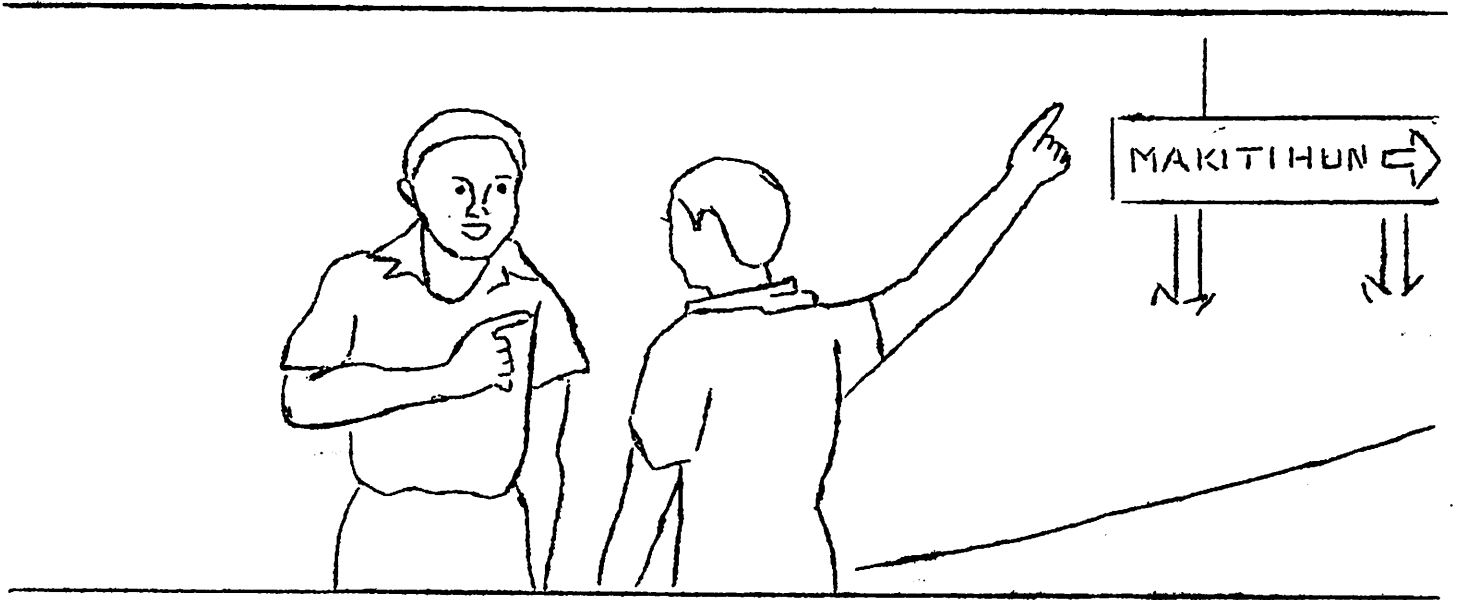
Ye	Who	Ye mia bi loni	Who sent you
Gbc	What	Ye mia a ngie?	Who is he?
Gbɔɔ	What	Gbɔɔ bi wumba?	What is on your head?
		Ye mia pɛɛia?	Who is at home?
		Gbc mia ba piɛmbi?	What do you do here?

Reflexive Pronouns

These are expressed by the word yekpe (self) which immediately follows the basic pronouns.

Nya + yekpe	Nya yekpe	Myself
Bia + yekpe	Bia yekpe	Yourself
Ta + yekpe	Ta yekpe	Him/herself
Mua + yekpe	Mua yekpe	Ourselves
Tia + yekpe	Tia yekpe	Themselves

Nya longo a nya yekpe - I love myself
Ti tia yekpe nonanga - They have wounded themselves



Demonstrative Pronouns

These are:

Ji	This	Jisia	These
Na	That	Nasia	Those

Pujei mia a ji	This is pepper
Ji me	Eat this
Na vembe	Give me that one
Na yekpei ji ma	That is better than this
Jisia ti nyandei nasia na	These are prettier than those

LESSON SIX

BARGAINING

Cultural Explanation

Bargaining is common among the Mendes. They always try to beat down prices of certain goods. There are however certain food items one cannot bargain for, one will know that as one continues going to the market.

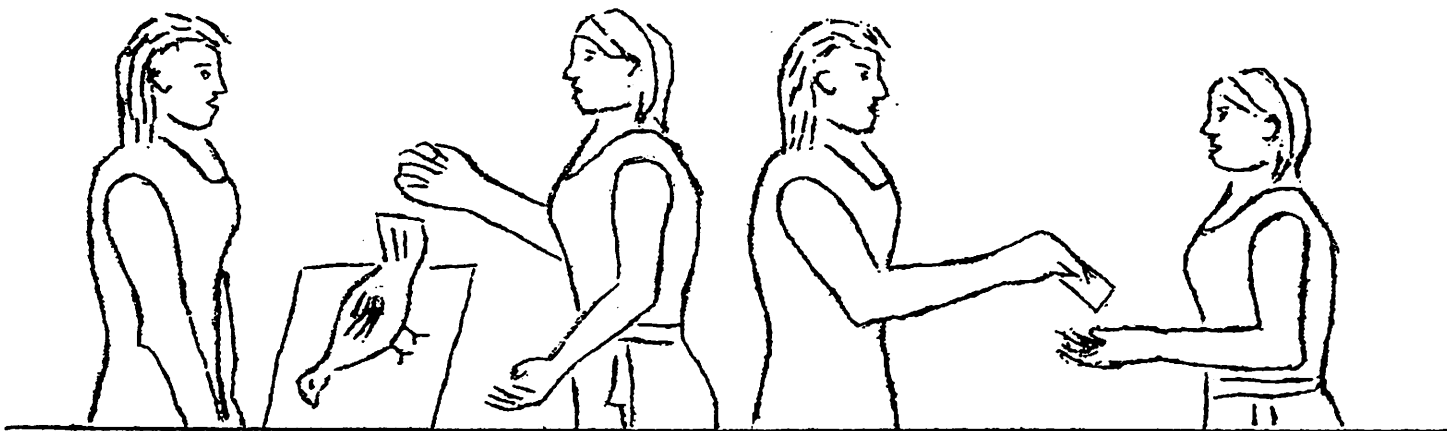
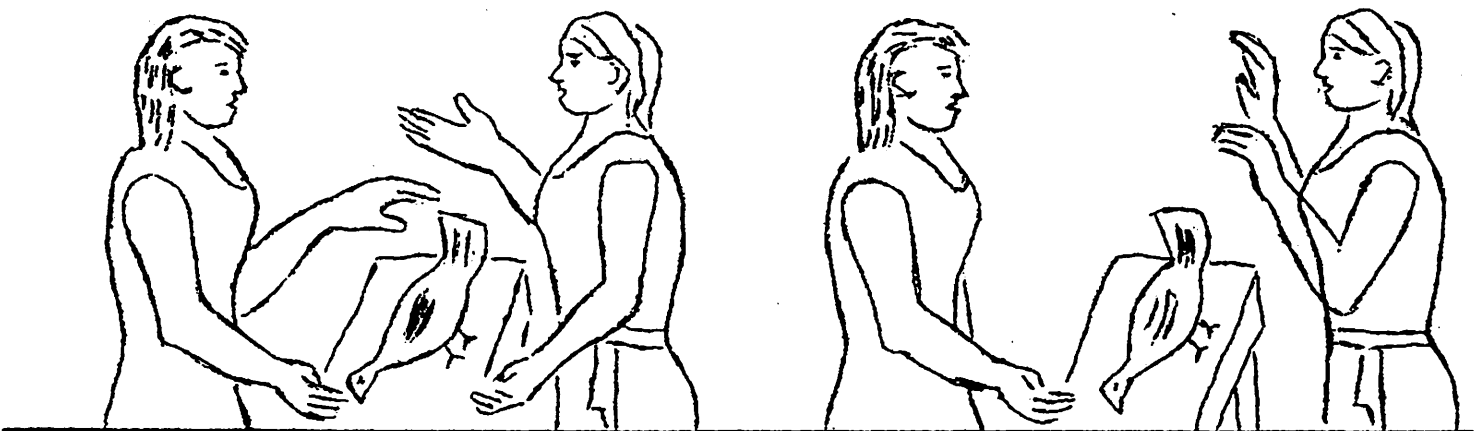
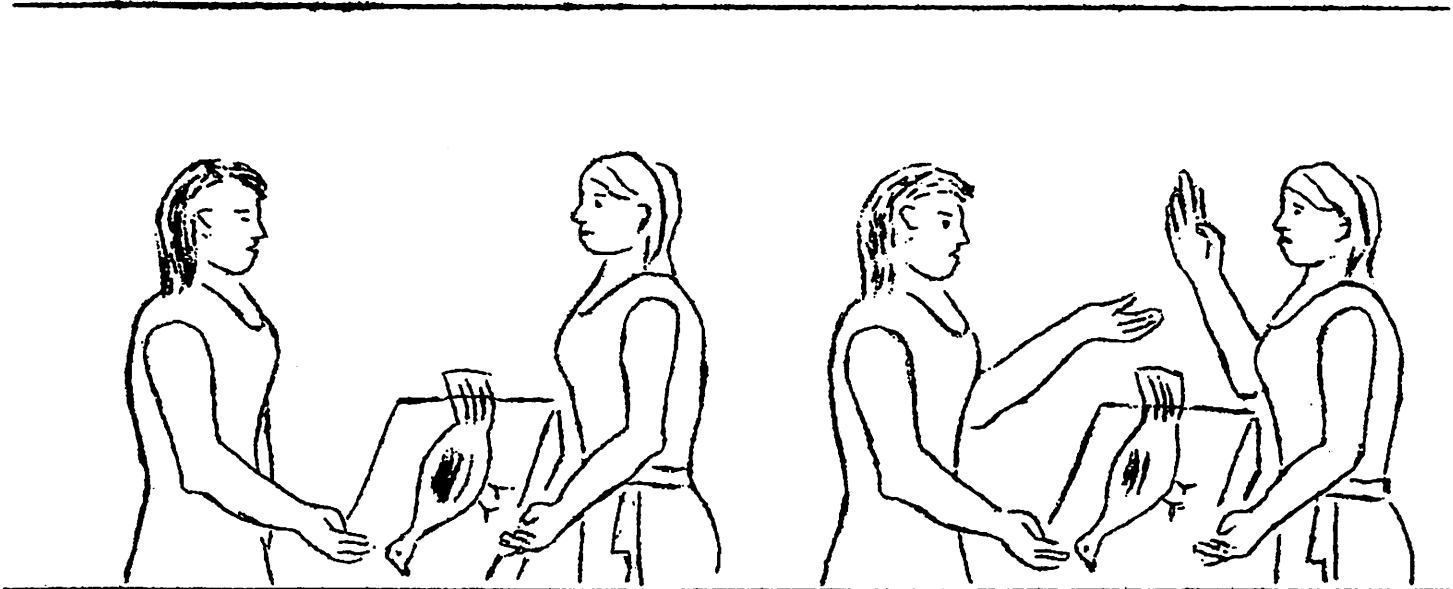
Bargaining is especially necessary for PCVs because some traders take chances by inflating prices when selling to strangers.

DIALOGUE

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PCV: Yie bia naa | Afternoon, mum |
| MW: Mm, nya lui bia naa | Yea, afternoon my child |
| Gboɔ nga pie bie? | What can I do for you? |
| PCV: Tee ngei jisia ti | What is the cost of these |
| jongoi? | fowls? |
| MW: Pon numufele gboyongo | Le40.00 each |
| yila va | |
| PCV: Ti baa gba ngoi yo | They are expensive though |
| Be mahun yei klo nya we? | Won't you reduce this price |
| | for me? |
| MW: Gbenjongo mia bi yeya? | How much do you have? |
| PCV: Pon numugboyongo mahun | I have Le30.00 |
| puu mia nya yeya. | |
| MW: Pon loolu glua na ma | Add Le10.00 to that |
| PCV: Kone le ngi na ve. | Please let me pay that. |
| Gbe-o-gbe ii ya nya yeya | I have nothing left with me |
| MW: Ke wa la | Bring it then |
| PCV: Tagbe, baika hoe | Here it is, thank you.. |
| Nya ndiamo mia a bie na | You are now my friend |
| MW: E-ye malo | O.k. see you |

Alternate Forms

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Tei gbe jongo? | How much is the fowl? |
| Pon loolu gbei na ma. | Add Le10.00 to that |
| Be tenga gbua ma nya | Won't you reduce the price |
| we? | for me? |



Useful Expressions

- Nya longo a sakii - I want cassava leaf
- Nya longo ngi nikii yeya - I want to buy groundnuts
- Ngii paa waa Saloi na va - I won't pay for the orange
- Bi gba gbi ya nya ma - I don't owe you anything more
- Fufu me min mia ha n a ma - I want to eat fufu today
- Nya longo ha ngi tangei me - I want to eat cassava
root today
- Bondo hapkei mia ha nga me - I am going to eat okra
plasa today

LESSON SEVEN

INTRODUCING A FRIEND

Cultural Element

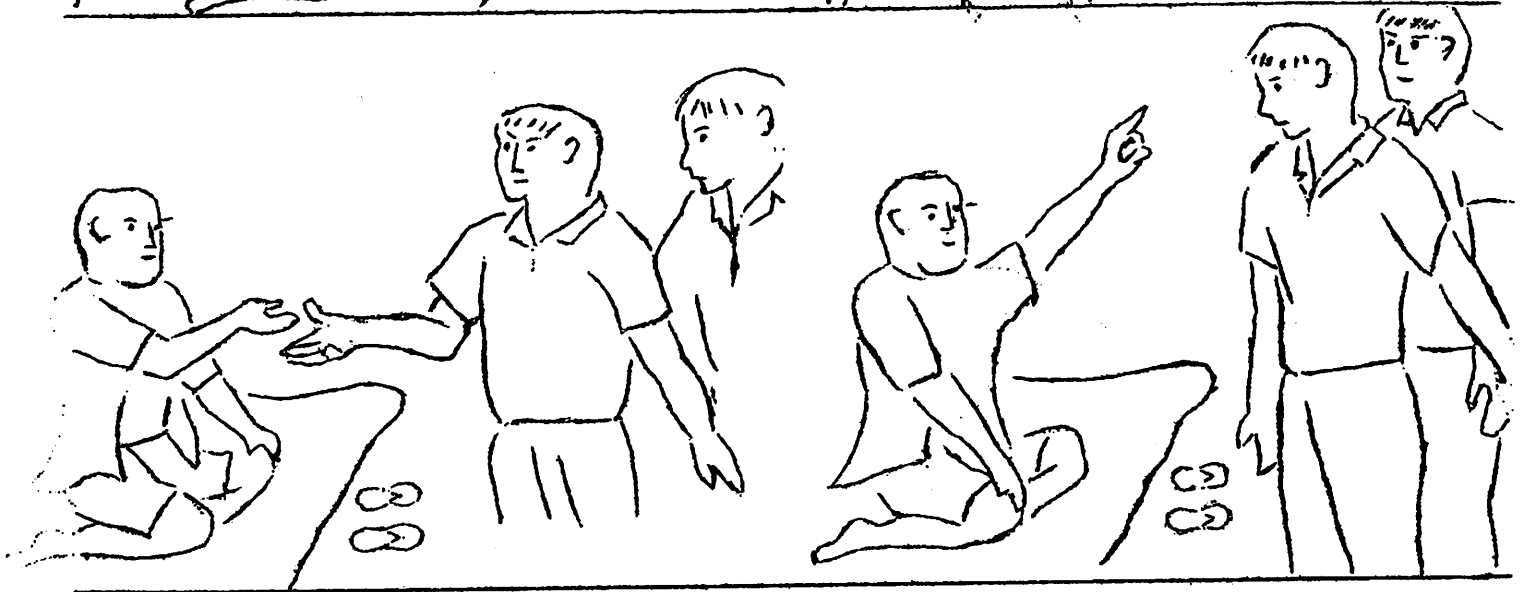
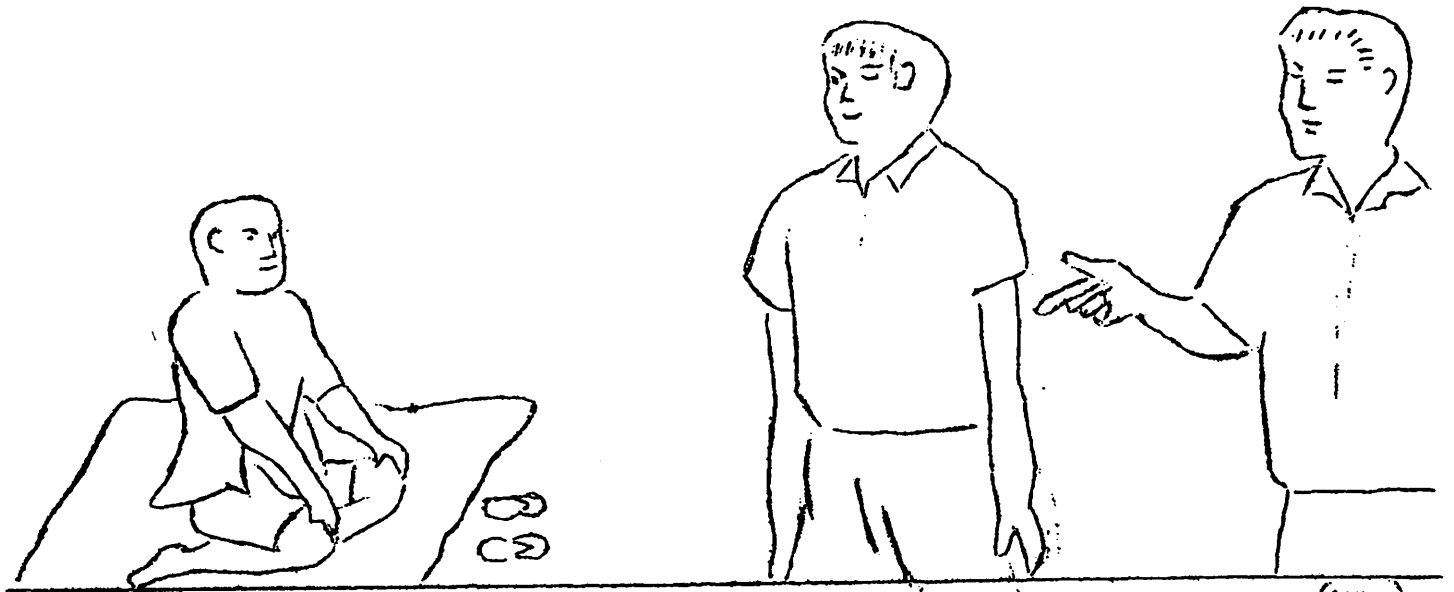
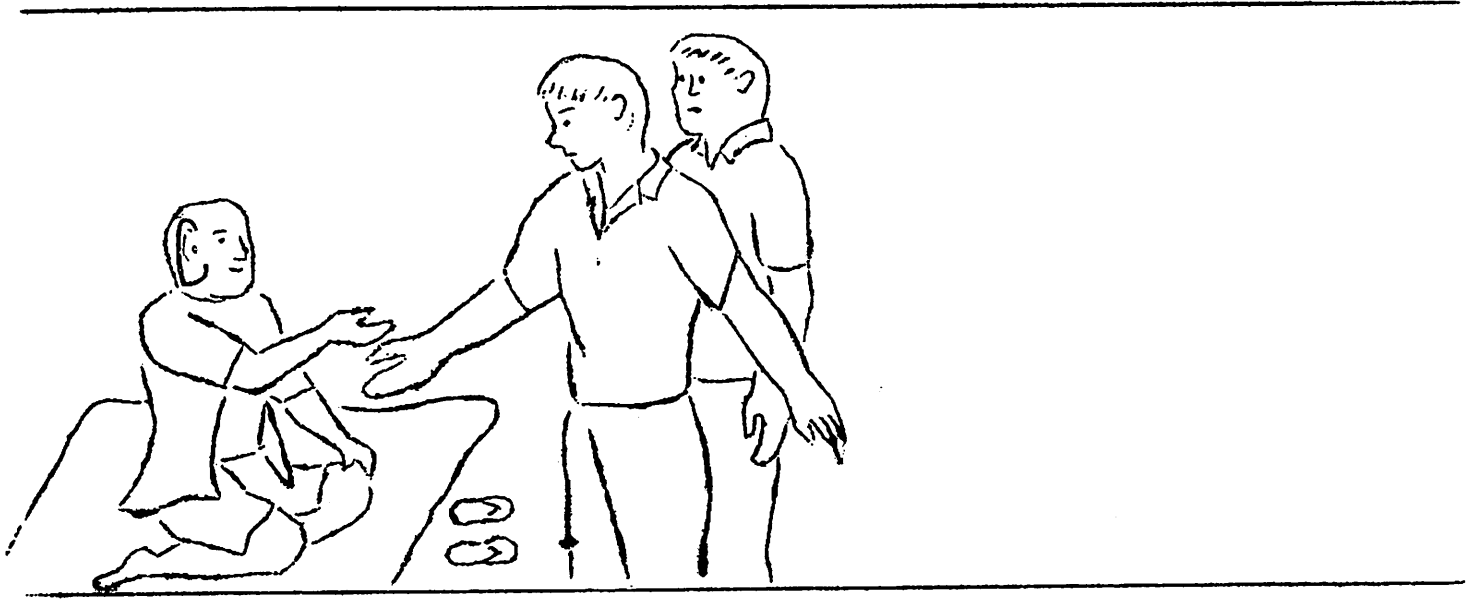
It is right and fitting to introduce a friend or anyone else to other acquaintances. This is world-wide as it is a principle of social protocol.

DIALOGUE

PCV:	Maada bia naa	Good afternoon, oldman/ grandpa
LH:	Mm, nya lui bi sic	Hi, good day my son
PCV:	Maada nya n damui lo ngi laa Al	Grandpa, this is my friend: he is called Al
LH:	Al buaa, nya gohun nengo bi lo va	Good day Al, I'm glad to see you
Al:	Nya bee nya gohun nengo bi lo va	I am also happy to see you
LH:	Ba yenge mi/lo?	Where do you work?
Al:	Nga yenge Otamba lo	I work at Outamba
LH:	Mu ngewoo, hewui gbe	Please have seat
Al:	Bi sic	Thank you

Alternate Uses

Ba gbe yenge lo wie?	What work do you do?
Gbe yenge mia ba pie?	" " " " " ?
Mi mia ba yenge na?	Where do you work?



VERBS

TRANSITIVE VERBS

These take objects, overt or covert. The direct object precedes the verb.

Jon selci menga	John has eaten the banana
Ndopoi koti wiinga	The ^{child} has thrown the stone
Kamo ngi lewenga	The teacher has beaten him
I nja lowei bonga	He has dug a well

Intransitive Verbs

These do not take objects.

I windenga	He has jumped
Ti wimenga	They have run
Mua yiima	We are sleeping
Taa yeema	He is laughing
Wua lapima	You are fighting
Tia laapima	They are swimming

Some verbs may or may not occur with mutated initial consonants. When they occur with unmutated initial consonants they behave transitively i.e. the direct object is understood even if not overtly present, but when they occur with mutated initial consonants they behave intransitively.

Nga fembelo	I'll swing it/I swing it
Jo pindenga	Joe has jumped it
A kotolo	He will bend it
Ba vembelo	You will swing
Wu potenga	You have turned it

Imperative Form

Only the stem of the verb is used for the singular form. If an object is unexpressed the verb has a mutated initial consonant, otherwise it has an unmutated initial consonant.

- A. Verbs with mutated initial consonants: no objects are present or implied.

Le	go up
Wa	Come
Li	Go
La	Lie down

- B. Verbs have ^{un}mutated initial consonants: the objects are understood.

Fenda	Fill it
Njoyo	Send it
Ngate	Set it
Koto	Bend it

Verbs of Posture

The state of a verb is marked by the suffix -ni and the act by the suffix -ma.

Swale lo loma	Swaray is standing (act)
Swale lo loni	Swaray is standing (state)
Nyaa hema	I am sitting (act)
Nyaa heni	" " " (state)
Taa wecni	He is bowing down (state)
Taa wecma	" " " " (act)

The Verb 'To Be' - 'Ye'

A. Present Positive

Nyaa I am
Biaa You are
Taa He/she is
Muaa We are
Wuaa You are (plu)
Tiaa They are

Present Negative

Nya yana - I am not
Bia yana You are not
Ta yana He/she is not
Mua yana We are not
Wua yana You are not
Tia yana They are not

Past

Ngi yee I was
Bi yee You were
I yee He/she was
Mu yee We were
Wu yee You were
Ti yee They were
Ngi yee na I was there
Ngii ye na I was not there

Future

The pronoun changes and the future marker lo is used.

Nga yee lo I will be
A yee lo He/she will be
Ba yee lo You will be
Mua yee lo We will be
Ta yee lo They will be
Nga yee lo na I will be there
Ngei yee na I will not be there

REDUPLICATION OF VERBS

Verbs are reduplicated in order to intensify or indicate repeated action. Reduplicated verbs have the same grammatical distribution as their single forms, and their second part has the same initial consonant.

Single Forms

Tewe Cut
Mbla Tear
Pote Turn
Faya Scatter
Pili Throw

Reduplicated Forms

Tewetewe (teetee)
Mblambla
Fotepote
Fayafaya
Filipili

Some adjectives are reduplicated as intensifiers.

Single Forms

Nyande Beautiful
Nohon Dirty
Nyamu Ugly

Reduplicated Forms

Nyandenyande
Nohonchon
Nyamunyamu

Numerals can also be reduplicated

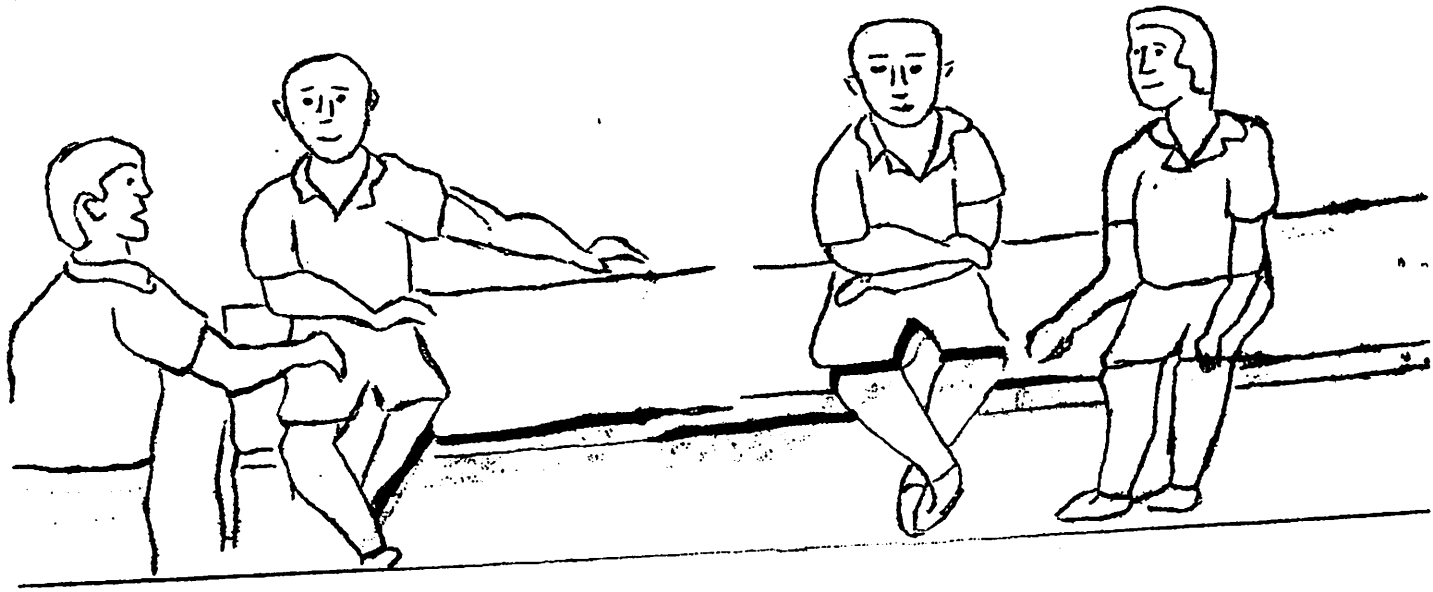
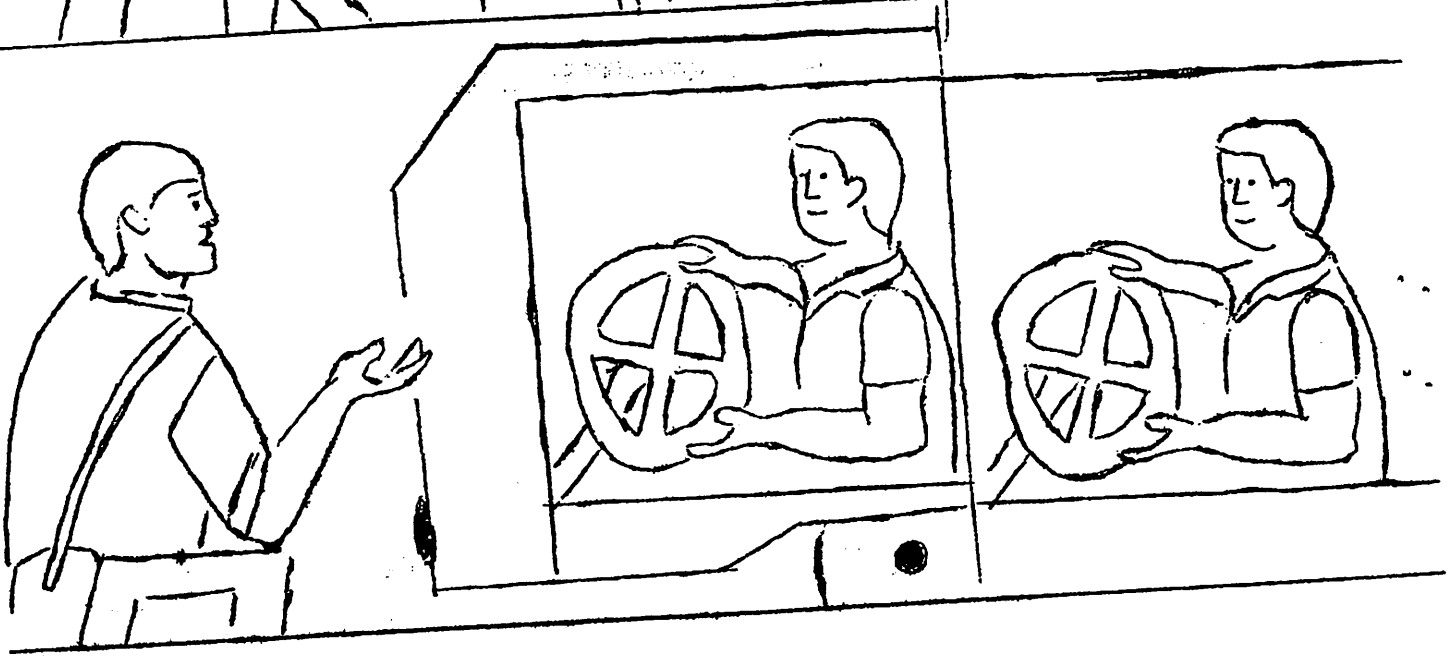
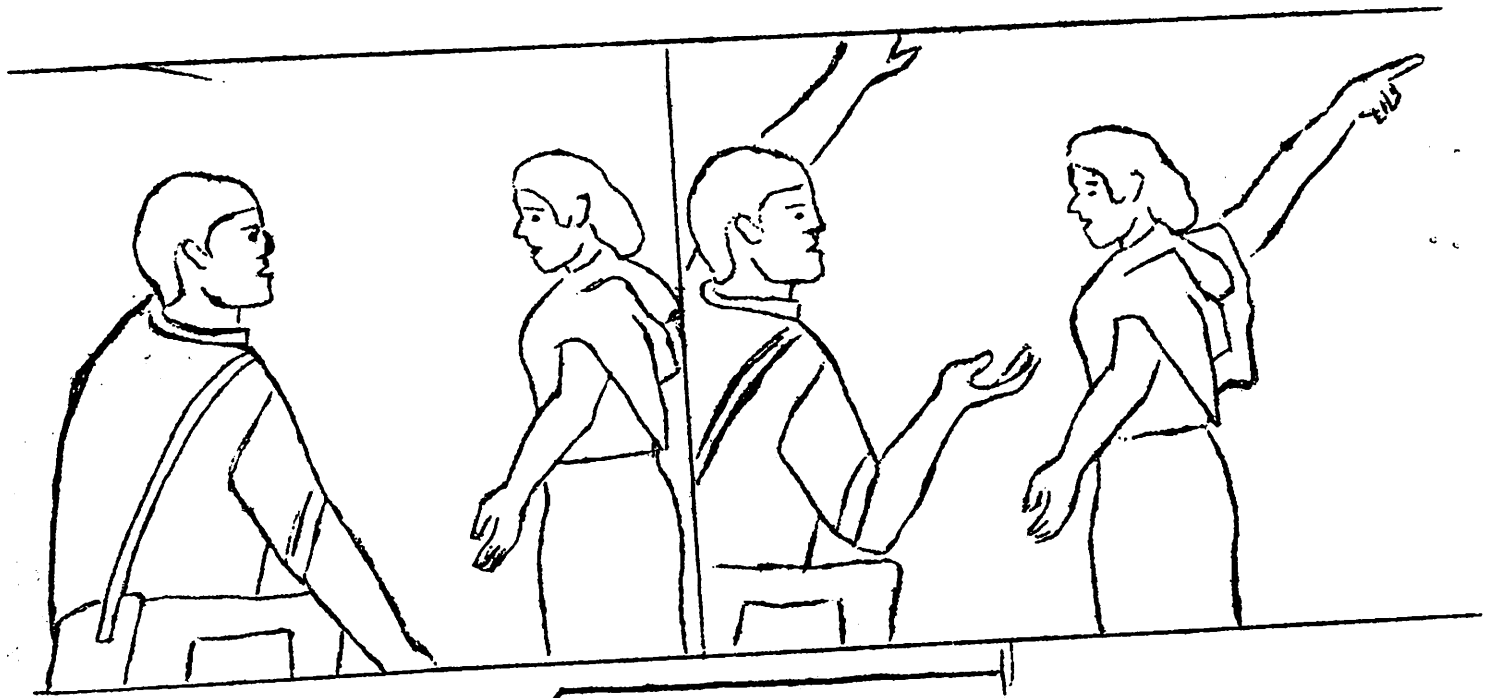
Ngila One
Sawa Three
Puu Ten
Fele Two

Ngilangila
Sawasawa
Puu puu
Felefele

Adverbs too can be reduplicated.

Flo Quickly
Yelen Slowly

Floflo
Yelenyelen



LESSON EIGHT

TRANSPORTATION

Cultural Element

Transportation system in Sierra Leone is adversely different from other places. There are not enough commercial vehicles to meet the needs of the people. People can therefore travel on board vehicles together with livestock and domestic animals. Some people especially the youths also afford to travel on top of vehicles even at their own risks. Overloading is common in all commercial vehicles. Transport fares are not fixed, so bargaining prevails. Only the Sierra Leone Road Transport Corporation buses and the other buses that travel between Freetown and the provincial towns have fixed fares.

DIALOGUE

LH: Nyande/ndake bia naa	Afternoon dear
PCV: Mm buwaa bi sic	Afternoon
LH: Nga to haka hui bi yeya. Bi ye lima a gendei ji?	I see you with a luggage. where are going to this morning?
PCV: Ngi lima Moyamba lo	I'm going to Moyamba
Mindo mia nga motoi mawulo na?	Where can I get a vehicle?
LH: Lo leke jonsoe la, motoi ya le ma bi to, bi moli mia i'lima na	Just stand at the junction, when any vehicle comes by, stop in and enquire where it is going to

Vehicle Stops

PCV: Deva buaa, bi lima milo?	Hello driver, where are you going to?
Driver: Bia bi lima mi lo?	Where are you going to?
PCV: Ngi lima Moyamba lo	I'm going to Moyamba
Driver: Nya be ngi lima na lo	I'm also going there
PCV: Gbe jogo mia li va?	What is the fare to go there?
Driver: Pon nunaani gbogo	Hundred and sixty leones

PCV: Kpoo! kpotogoi yo
Konele ngi pon nusawa
gbogomahun loolu ve
Driver: Ndake na glo go, pon
loolu la ma

Oh! it's too much
Please let me pay hundred
and thirty leones
That is small please add
ten leones

PCV: Kulu goi
Driver: Hakaa bi yeya?

O.k.
Do you have any luggage

PCV: Duvu bagi wui ji mia
lee nya yeya. Nga too
lo pen ngoma
Driver: Ke le yo

I only have this small
rafia bag. I can put it
on my lap
Get in then

In the Vehicle

PCV: Ndiamo bi sie, konele
malukpe nya we hoe
(Passenger shifts)
Baika
Bia be bi ma Moyamba
lo?

Good day friend, please
shift a little for me.

Pass: Oo

Thank you
Are you also going to
Moyamba?
Yes

PCV: Bia bi womia a mbalei
ji?

Are you the owner of this
sheep?

Pass: Oo, ngi ma saa lo gbia-
ma

Yes, I'm going to offer
sacrifice

Alternate Forms

Bi ma mi lo?

Where are you going to?

Ba li mi?

" " " " " ?

Nga motoi majo milo?

Where can I get a vehicle?

Nga motoi wumbu milo

" " " " " ?

Ngi bi ngo a pon...

Let me pay...leones

Useful Expressions

Nga ye pie ngi motoi majo?	How can I get a vehicle?
Mindo ma moto lo?	Where is this vehicle from/going to?
Motoi ji ye lima?	Where is this vehicle going to?
Ye moto lo?	Whose vehicle is this?
Bia bi wolo a motoi ji?	Are you the owner of this vehicle?
Li a nge O	Please take me along
Deva nya gbuja bei	Put me down here
Hemaa na nya vaa?	Is there any space for me?

TENSES

The Habitual Form

Lo is the habitual tense marker. Its grammatical distribution is not, however, fixed; it occurs as a verbal suffix when it directly follows a verb and as an independent lexical item in other positions.

Mua lilo suku	We go to school
Ta kpetei la a hamei lo	They make swamp during the rainy season
A kpaa lalo fo gbi	He makes a farm every year
Nga li ngengemi a gendei lo	I go to work every morning

The Future Form

If a future element is added to the verb to which lo is suffixed, then the verb has a future reference.

Nga lilo Bo sina	I shall go to Bo tomorrow
Ta walo ha	They will come today
Mua kpaa la lo vonu	We shall make a farm next year
Ba nye lowei boo sina yekei	You will dig a fish pond the day after tomorrow

The Progressive Form

-Ma is the progressive marker.

Taa mema	He is eating it
Nya hooma	I am sewing it
Wua ndolii gama	Your are dancing
Tia lima	They are going

Note: Future

Futurity can also be expressed by using wama before the verb.

Ngi wama limaa teihun	-	Literal translation	-	I am coming to go to town.
				I shall be going to town.
Mu wama lima Bo lo		We are coming to go to Bo		
		We shall be going to Bo		

Simple Past

Can be formed by adding lo to the verb.

Ngi lilo	I went
Piskoisia ti pee lilo	The Peace Corps built the house

Elision

In rapid speech, consonants and vowels may be elided from a word sentence. They can occur in the following contexts.

a) Intervocalic l and w are generally elided

<u>Unelided Word</u>		<u>Elided Sound</u>	<u>Elided Word</u>	
Tewe	-	Cut	W	Tee
Ndowu	-	Hide	W	Ndou
Pele	-	Road	L	Pee
Ngolo	-	Break	L	Ngoo

b) Consonants are frequently elided from the verbal suffixes:

-lo and -nga

Ngi lio	I went	(for ngi lilo)
I ndeio	He said it	(for ndeilo)
Mu meo	We have eaten it	Mu meilo/menga
Piskoesia	The Peace Corps	
ti waa	have come	Piskoesia ti wanga

c) In the verbal suffixes, -malo and -ngalo the l may be elided and the o assimilated to the preceding vowel.

Ngi lima	I am going	for ngi limalo
Ti piema	They are doing it	for ti piemalo
I wonga	It has broken	for i wongalo

d) The l of the emphatic particle, lo can be elided and the o assimilated the last vowel of the preceding word.

Nya wama	I am coming	for nya lo wama
Taa memo	He is eating it	for ta lo memo

e) The vowels u, i, and e can be elided in certain words if they are followed by l.

Klo	in front	(for kulo)
Mbla	male in-law	(for mbila)

CONSONANT MUTATION

This is a feature of Mande languages. It is a system wherein the initial consonants in many words are mutated by simple lenition. This means that, because of phonological similarity, certain consonants change places in some words when in initial position. Normally, such consonants are phonetically similar in most respects.

The following table shows the mutations.

<u>Unmutated</u>		<u>Mutated</u>	
K	Kali	G	Gali
T	Towei	L	Lowei
Nd	Ndoli	L	Loli
S	Sani	J	Jani
F	Folo	V	Volo
Kp	Kpaki	Gb	Gbaki
Nj	Nja	Y	Ya
Mb	Mba	B	Ba
P	Pele	W	Wele
Ng	Ngate	Y	Yate
Ng	Ngoli	W	Woli

Note: Ng is mutated to y before the vowels a, e, i, but to w before o and u.

This process of mutation occurs only in connected speech in certain grammatical environments. In isolation, these words are said to have their natural consonants. The most common grammatical environments where consonant mutations are found are as follows:

A) When a noun is used in the possessive form the initial consonant changes.

Tokoi	-	The hand	Nya lokoi lo gbaléma My hand is wounded/aching
Domei	-	The shirt	Bi lomei nohongo Your shirt is dirty
Pelci	-	The house	Ngi welei nyandengo His house is beautiful
Kpukoi	-	The bed	Mu gbukoisia ti wovaa Our beds are old

- B) Where the first noun functions as an adjective, the initial consonant of the second noun is mutated in nominal compounds.

Ja	Water	=	Ja-lowei	-	Water well
NDowei	Hole				
Ndo	Child	=	Mende lo	-	Mende child
Mende	Mende				
Poo	Earth/mud	=	Poo vei	-	Earthen pot
Fei	Pot				
Tokpo	Palm tree	=	Tokpo yasei	-	Palm branch
Jasei	Thatch				

- C) When a verb comes after an object (noun) in a sentence, the initial consonant of the verb is mutated.

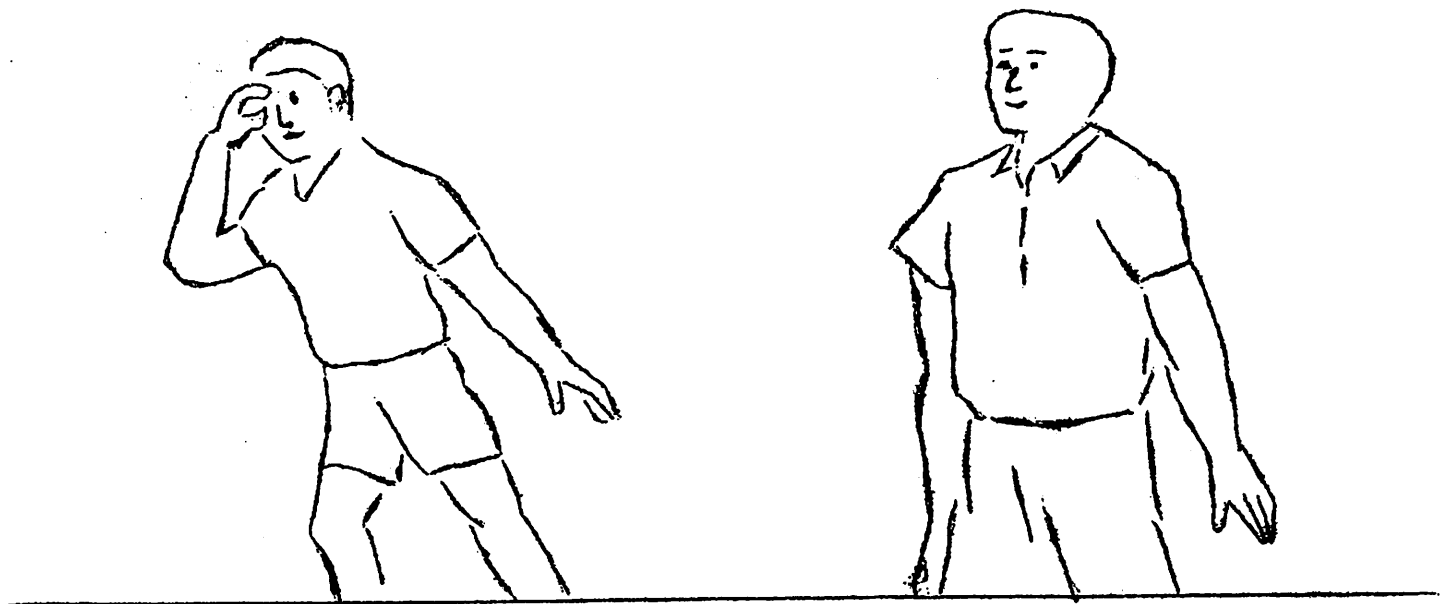
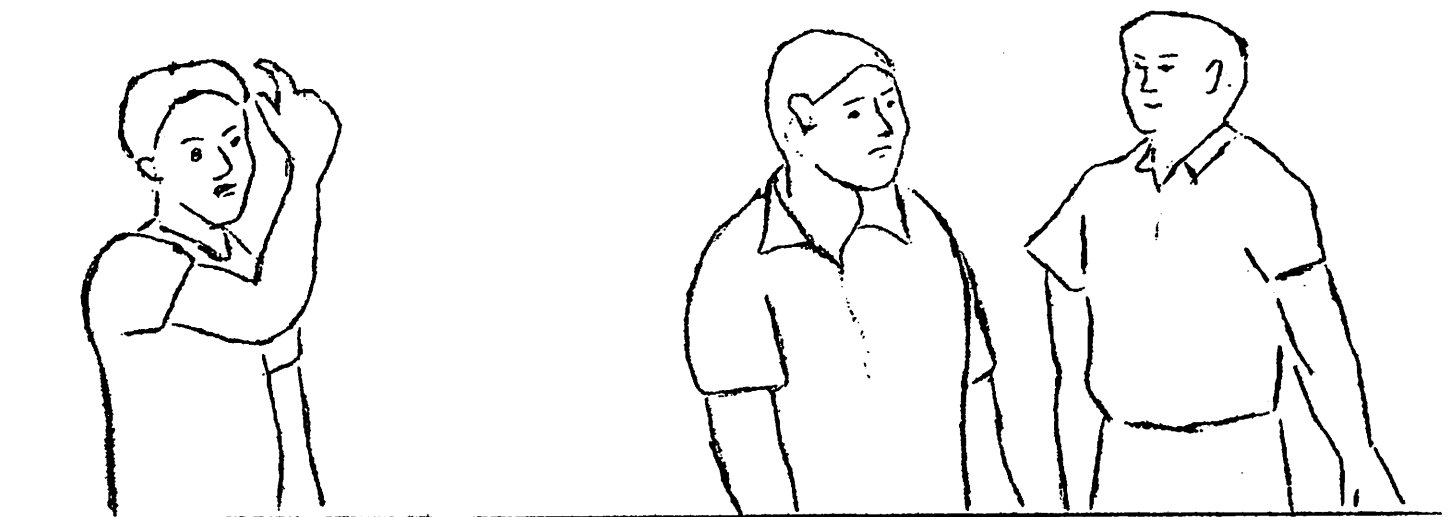
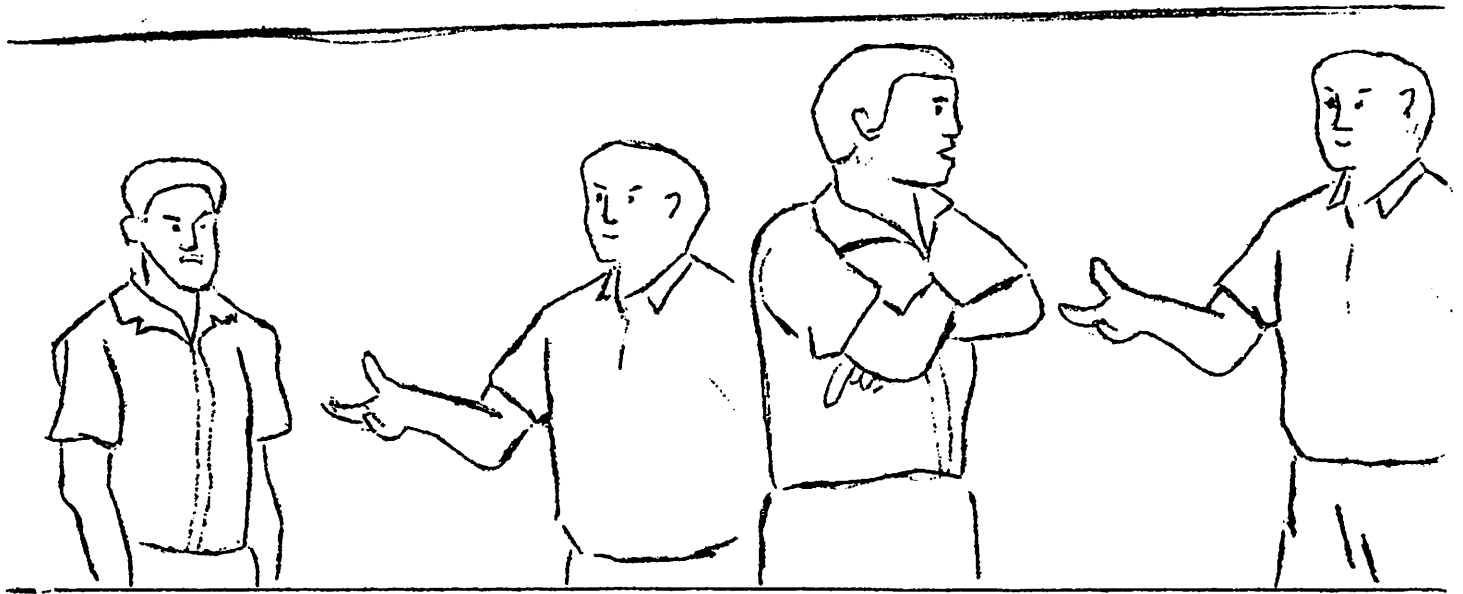
Ngi kbandilo	I heated it
Ngi jei gbandilo	I heated the water
Bi nguanilo	You washed (it)
Bi kluei wuanilo	You washed the clothes
Mundewenilo	We beat (it)
Mu ndof lewenilo	We beat the child

- D) Where a post position is preceded by a noun, a pronoun, the initial consonant of the post position is mutated.

Kplanga	-	Near	
Lo kplanga			Stand near (it)
Lo pelci gplanga			Stand near the house
Poma	-	Behind	
Hi poma			Sit behind (it)
Hi ngi woma			Sit behind him/her
Kakama	-	By the side	
Nda kakama			Place (it) by the side
Nda kpukue Sakama			Place it by the side of the bed

- E) An adjective preceded by a noun, pronoun, has a mutated initial consonant.

Teli	-	Pelc leli	Black house
Kutu	-	Numu gutu	Short person



LESSON NINE

HEALTH

HOW TO COMPLAIN ILLNESS

LH:	Ndake, gbei bi ya ha koyo?	Friend, why are you so dull today?
PCV:	Nya gahun mia ii gbue	I am not feeling well
LH:	Gboo bi ma?	What is wrong with you?
PCV:	Nya gahuin gbi mia a gbaa kpaas. Nya wui a gbalc ke nya gblagei jia gbi. Kolei be a wu nya ma.	I have pains all over my body. My head aches as well as my joints. I also feel feverish.
LH:	Kenga gbeloi mia behin. Gbena hoe. Be li ba dokta lo haiwebu?	Perhaps it is malaria. Have my sympathy. Why not go and see the doctor in the hospital?
PCV:	Nga li lo sina weidihun	I will go to the hospital tomorrow
LH:	Ngewo i bi hale	May the Lord cure you
PCV:	Amina. Malo sina	Amen. See you tomorrow

Alternate Forms

Nya hingbego	I am sick/I am not feeling well
Ngewo i bi bao	May the Lord cure you

Useful Expressions

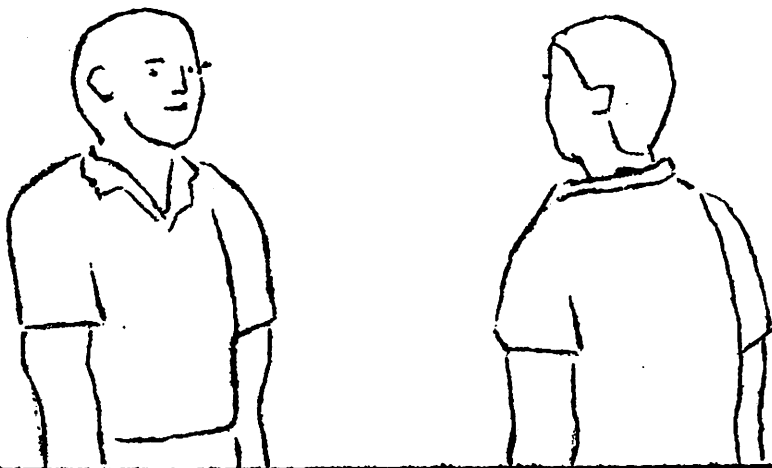
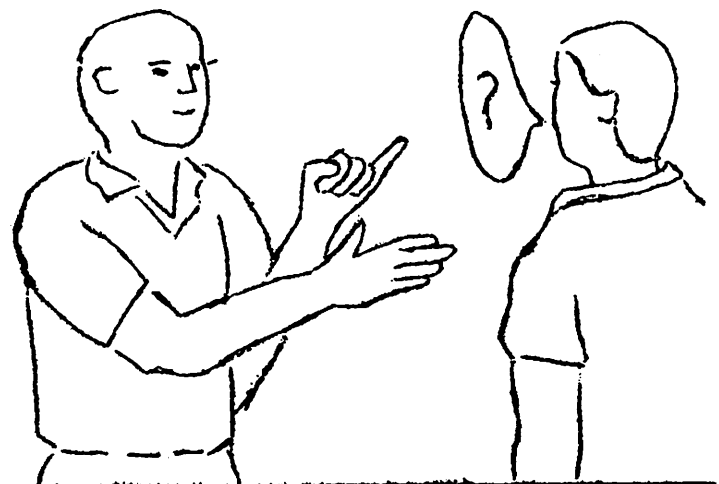
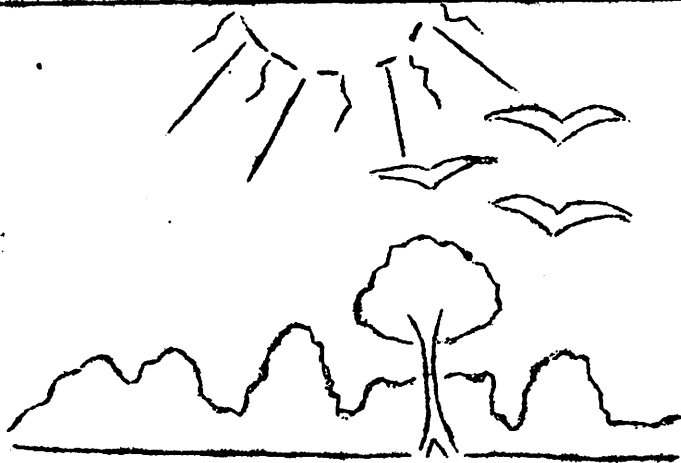
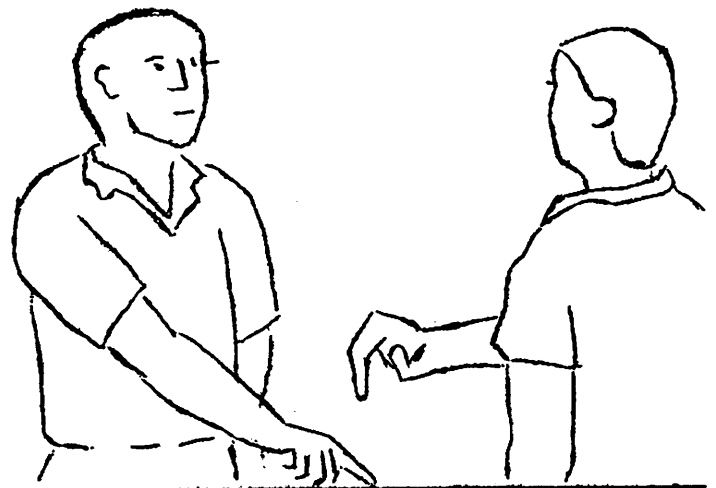
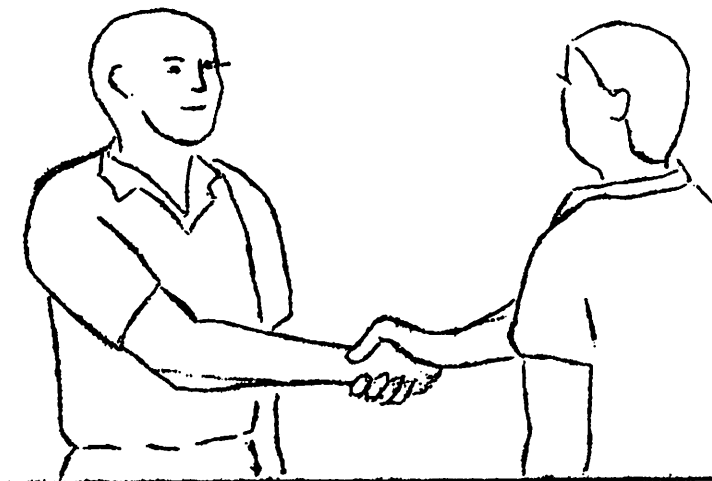
Nya goihun a gbini	I have a gripe in the stomach
Nya goihun a le	I have frequent stool
Nohuin mia gbia nya luma	I have scabbies on my skin
Kanyei mia nya ma	I have gonorrhoea
Bumblei mia ngi goweima	I have elephantiasis
Nya yani mia a gbale	My eye is aching
Fei mia laa nya ma	I have a boil
Kohun gbale hale lo bi yeya?	Do you have any medicine for stomach ache

Parts of the Body

See parts of body in glossary/vocabulary.

List of Illness and Diseases

Gbeloe	Malaria
Kpokpoe	Cripple/lame
Nyonye	Measles
Tohen bei	Tuberculosis
Tetch	Small pox
Bandahei/Bumbulei	Elephantiasis
Luaa	Hernia
Fundii	Asthma
Vio lohen	Whooping cough
Kanyii	Gonorrhoea
Nohuin	Scabbies
Puumui	Blindness
Malete	Leprosy
Kpalmei	Sore
Geli	Ulcer
Bobui	Small pox
Peni	Ringworm
Sugbui	Body wide scabbies
Ndivui	Small boil
Fehani	Tumour
Gbeli	Blue boil
Kaalei	Abscess muscular contraction
Kpoli	A worm of any kind
Gbale (v)	To pain
Bali (v)	To vomit
Kale hingbe	Rheumatism
Njii hingbe	Sleeping sickness
Popui	Skin diseases leaving white patches
Kewei	Yaws



Substitution Drill

Trainers Cue

Tene	Monday
Taata	Tuesday
Alaba	Wednesday
Aikamisa	Thursday
Aijuma	Friday
Sibiti	Saturday
Lahadi	Sunday

Trainers Cue

Ha tene

Useful Expressions

Ngawui gbindingo	The moon is dark
Migbe mia bi lima teihun?	When are you going to town?
Sibitima mia nga li teihun	I'll go to town on Saturday
Fui gbadi go waa ha	The sun is too hot today
Kolei lo wama wa ha	The weather is too cold today
Bodui lo waa wama	I'm feeling too hot today
Njei gbii ngo	It's cloudy - it may rain

Vocabulary

Hawa	Hour	Hawa loolu	Five Hours
Ku	Day	Ku fele	Two days
Loo	Day	Loo sawa	Three days
Folo	Day/sun	Foo gbadi	Hot sun
Ngau	Month/moon	Ngau puu	Ten months

Ngewohuin	At day break
Ngawui gbindigo	The moon is dark
Ngenda vui	Morning sun
Foe gbiala	At sunrise/when the sun is up
Foe hingegoihun	At sunrise
Foo ngundie	noon
Kpoko voe	Afternoon/evening
Kpindi liei	Midnight

ADVERBS

These normally occur in postverbal and initial positions.

A)	<u>Jia floflo</u>	Walk quickly
	Baa jia yelen	Don't walk slowly
	Wa <u>siahuna</u>	Come now
B)	<u>Na</u> mia ngi lli na	It is there I went
	<u>Bendo</u> mia ba pie ma	It is here you have to do it
	<u>Ha</u> lo i waa	It is today he came

You can see from above that adverbs which occur in initial positions are generally adverbs of place and time.

Examples of adverbs

Kaaka	Quickly
Ngaungaun	Arrogantly, proudly
Panda	Cautiously, carefully
Lombolo/gomondo	Sluggishly
Leele	Slowly
Mbe	Here
Sina	Tomorrow
Sange	Soon
Baaba	Foolishly

IDEOPHONES

These are adverbs mostly of degree and manner whose sound suggest their meaning (onomatopoea). Very few ideophones can be said to have any English equivalent and no English translation can give the sound effect which is one of their most distinguishing features. Unlike most of the other adverbs, ideophones always follow their governing verbs.

I ngeyei leweilo <u>kpe</u>	He cut the rope...
Fendango <u>kpa</u>	It is completely full
Ngi menga <u>nyao</u>	I have eaten everything
Guii guleilo <u>gbun</u>	The tree fell...

The underlined words are ideophones.

Kpe means cutting something with a sharp instrument in one clear, clean sweep.

Nyao does not only mean eating everything, but also eating it greedily.

Gbun is the falling sound of, say, a big tree.

Other Ideophones:

Gbelein	-	Sound like that of a bell
Polon	-	Far, very far

Interrogative Adverbs

Mi/mindo	Where?
Migbe	When?
Lole	How many?
Gbei	Why?

Mindo mia bi lima na?	Where are you going to?
Migbe mia bi wani ndoe jihun?	When did you come to this country?
Lole mia bi meni?	How many did you eat?
Gbei bi ngi hooni?	Why did you stone him?

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives follow the nouns they qualify.

E.g.: Numu <u>gbayango</u> ya a nge	I am not a strong person
Numu gutu mia	He is a short person

When adjectives occur with a definite and/or plural noun, the definite and/or plural markers are suffixed to the adjective and not the noun.

Ndapo nyamui ya ha	The ugly child has gone today
Pee gbittii loe	Brush the bushy road
Tamba lo lumbe lulei mama	Tamba is eating the rotten oranges
Mita goweisia mawa	Wash the white spoons
Nu wovangaa leke mia ti wani	Only old people came

The most frequently used adjectival form is -ngo.

Nyandengo	He/she/it is beautiful
Ninango	It is new
Govango	It is old
Telingo	It is black
Mahei mamuningo	The chief is proud/arrogant
Nyapoi nyandengo	The lady is beautiful
Ndomei laingo	The shirt is wet

-Ngo can take the definite singular and plural markers:
i and sia.

Kena gutungoi hanga	The short man has died
Baa ngengemo hawangoi na go	Don't give that lazy worker
Nika lilengoisia gbe	Drive the angry cows away

-Ngo can also take the agentive singular and plural markers.

Masubamo mia a ngie	He is a dangerous person
Nyamublaa kpec ti gbua	Let all ugly people go out
Hawableisia ti ndei mia	That belongs to the lazy people

Negative Forms

Adjectives take the suffix -ni to form the negative.

Bi nyahin ii nyandeni
Ndomei na ii nohoni
Ngii hawani

Your wife is not beautiful
The shirt is not dirty
I am not lazy

EMPHATIC FUNCTION

One of the functions of these particles is to positively emphasise.

In these examples the subjects are emphasised by these particles: le and mia

Nya le ngi pie ni
Yie mia wanga

I did it (nya emphasised)
It is mother who has come (yie emphasised)

Jo lo wani

It was Joe who came (Jo emphasised)

Le is more emphatic and has slightly different semantic implications. Mia suggests distance away from the speaker whilst lo suggests nearness. Le does not suggest either but it cannotes stronger emphasis than the others.

In the following sentences mia and lo can follow ye and nya but le is preferred because the speaker wishes to give an emphatic response that cannot be expressed by lo and mia.

Yie mia wanga?
Mm, ta le
Yoo pee la?
Nya le

Is it mother that has come?
Yes, it is she
Who is at the door
I

Le occurs with stative verbs to emphasise them. The l is, however, normally elided and the two words contracted.

Nyandegoe (for nyandego le)	She is beautiful
Kutungoe (for kutungo le)	It is short
Kowengoe (for kowengo le)	It is white

PARTICLES

Negative Particles: Ya and ii

They occur in structures such as:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----------------------------|
| A) | Keke ii lini suku | Father didn't go to school |
| | Nyapoi ii nyamuni | The lady is not ugly |
| | Ngii mbei mni | I did not eat the rice |

Note that ii precedes the verb it occurs with.

Ya is normally followed by the preposition a with which it can be contracted to form yaa.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Nu yekpe yaa nge | I'm not a good person |
| Nu nyamu ya tie | They are not bad people |
| I yaa wani le | He hasn't come yet |

Lo, mia, le

These have some grammatical distribution in common; they nevertheless have individual characteristics.

A) A is used instrumentally.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Me a loko | Eat with hand |
| Tee a mbowei | Cut it with the knife |
| Ndaala a kpaya | Draw it with strength |

b) It introduces the object after certain verbs.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ti wailo a mchen | They brought the food |
| I lilo a ngi navoe | He went with his money |

C) It introduces dependent verbs.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| I gbeilo a piela | He stopped doing it |
| I totonga a woola | He has started crying |
| Gbe a ycela | Stop laughing |

D) It introduces a-pronoun

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Tii loni a bie | They don't like you |
| Baa la a ngie | Don't believe him |
| Nya longo a tie | I like them |

Keleke occurs in sentences such as:

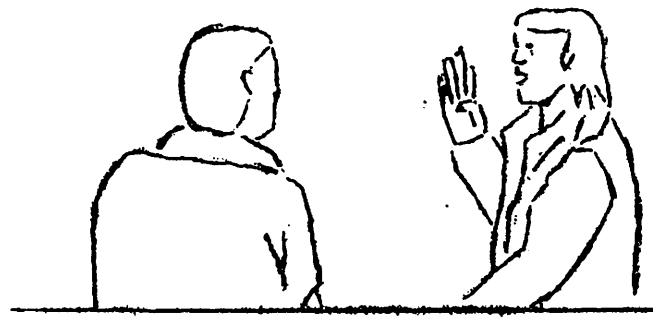
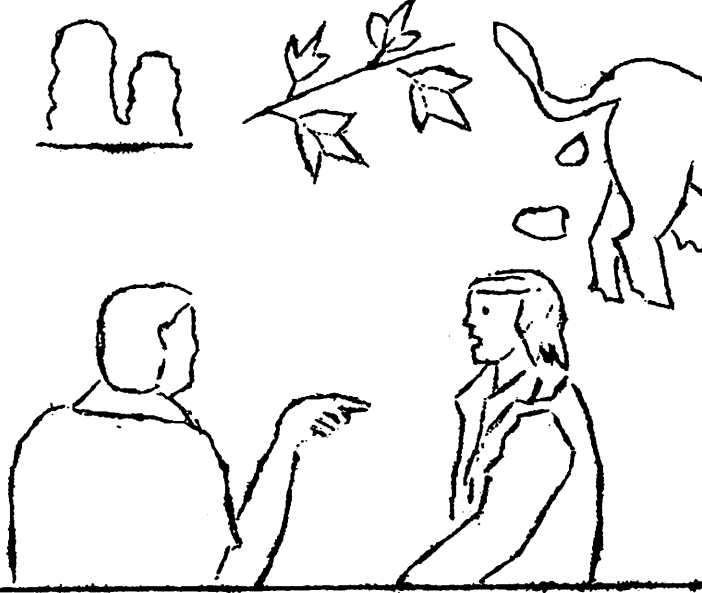
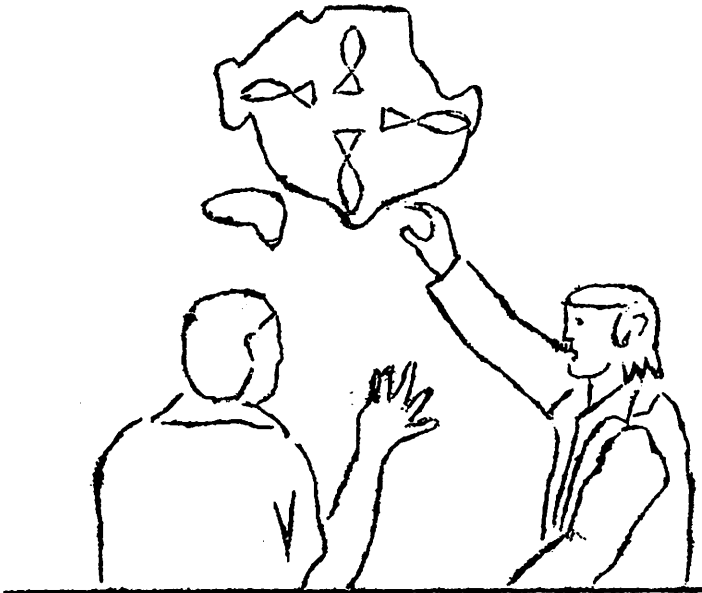
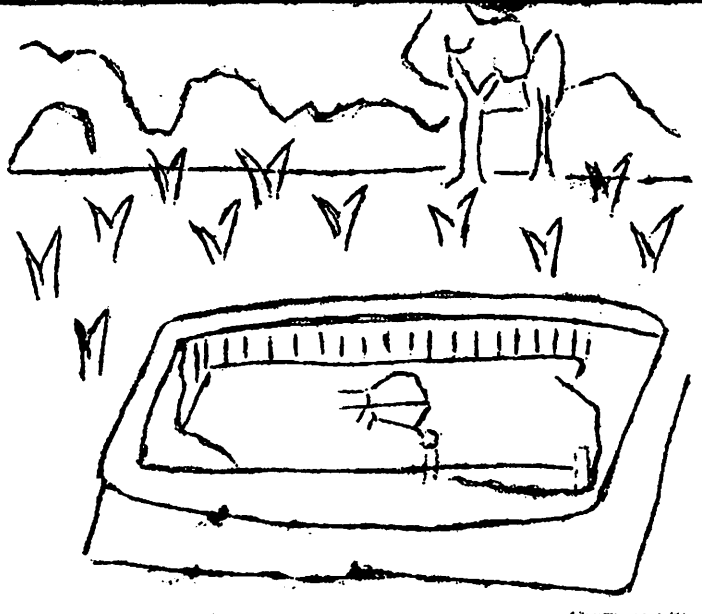
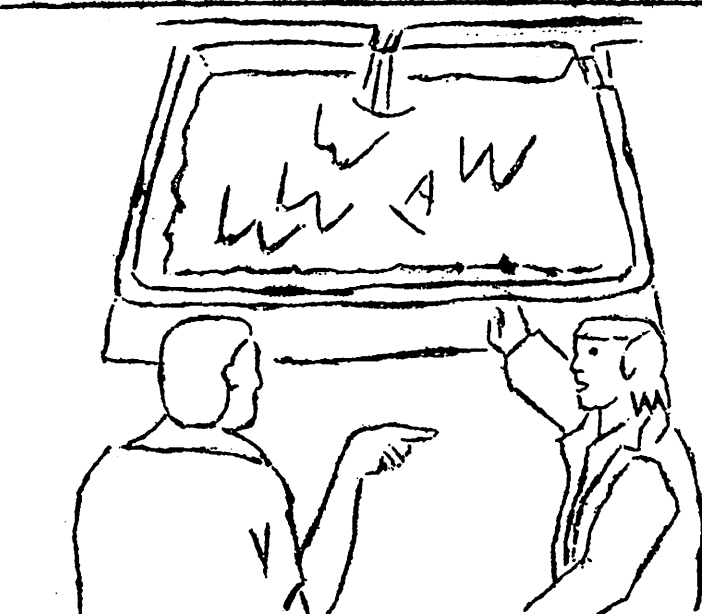
- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mu kpale mulilo keleke Jon | We all went except John |
| Nge pie keleke bi nya pawa | I can't do it except you pay me |

LESSON ELEVEN

FISH FARMER

DIALOGUE

- Farmer: Kini, bia ba gbe yenge lo wie?
PCV: Nga nungaalo gaa a nyc makelei
- Farmer: Ba ye ti make?
PCV: Numu ba dowei lo bo kpetelhun, bi hungbua fo
- Farmer: Ye dowei a ye lakpa?
PCV: Ye gaami a wie lo sia nyoko paa ji ma na. Tawa boma mahugo ye kpetei ji jei i yehun wati gbi
- Farmer: Mindoo ba nyengaa majo na puva ye dowei hun?
PCV: Nyc leengaalo ndoe jihun kpoto. Nyc make-blaa ye pekeisia ta ti majia gboma
- Farmer: Gboo ba fe tue mee va?
PCV: Ba ti goo a mba gei, ngiingaa, jowolaa, nika kpoi besi kpoi, kee je kpoi bee
- Farmer: Ta gau lolc lo wumbu pen numu a ya ti mee?
PCV: Ta gau naani lo wumbu
- Farmer: Bia bi ngiigo la ke liloma hinda lo?
PCV: Hinda yekpe lo numu kpelewa
- Farmer: Ke nya be ngi tatoma a nycгаа make la
PCV: Nga gohun a nce gbova bi ma
- Hello youngman, what work do you do?
I teach people fish farming
- How is fish farming done?
You should dig a pond in swamp and clear it completely
- How large should the pond be?
It should be about the size of this palour. It should also contain water always
- Where do you get the fish from to put in the pond?
There are fingerlings throughout this country. Other fish farmers also sell them
- What do you give them to eat?
Feed them with rice bran, termites, cow dung, pig dung, potato leaves and even excreta of sheep
- How many months do they take before one eats them?
They take four months
- Do you think this is a reliable venture?
This is a good thing for everyone
- Then I am also going to start fish farming
I will be very happy to help you



Useful Expressions

Nye make lei manengo

Nyandego nyi meva watigbi

Bi logo bi gaa a nye yengei?

Nga gbolo bi ma ye ngegei gaa

va

Fish farming is good

It's good to eat fish always

Do you want to learn fish
work?

I will help you to learn the
work

LESSON TWELVE

SCHOOL SITUATION

A parent enquiring about his son's progress in school.

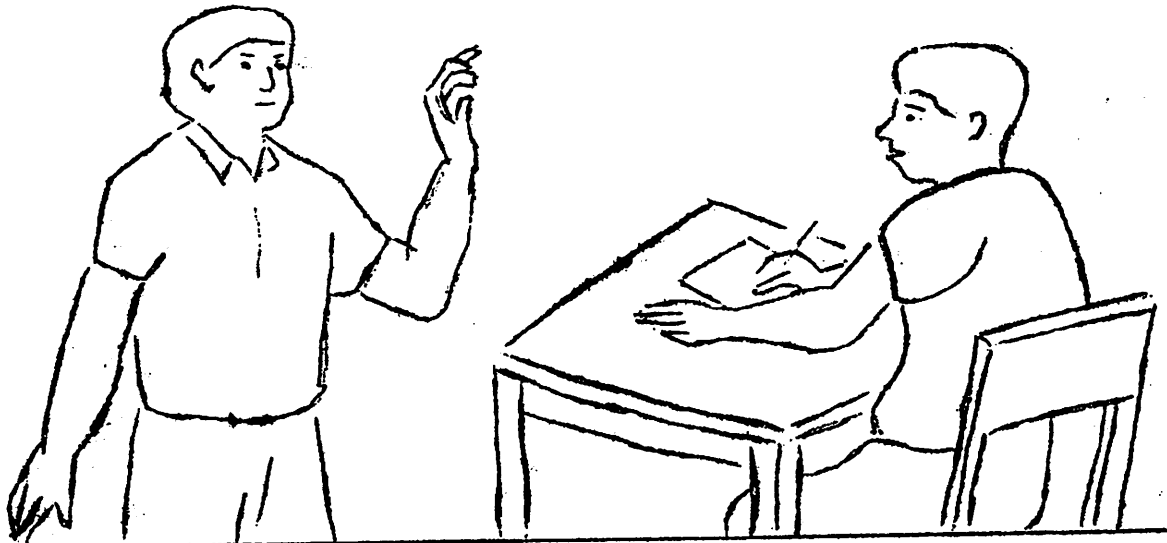
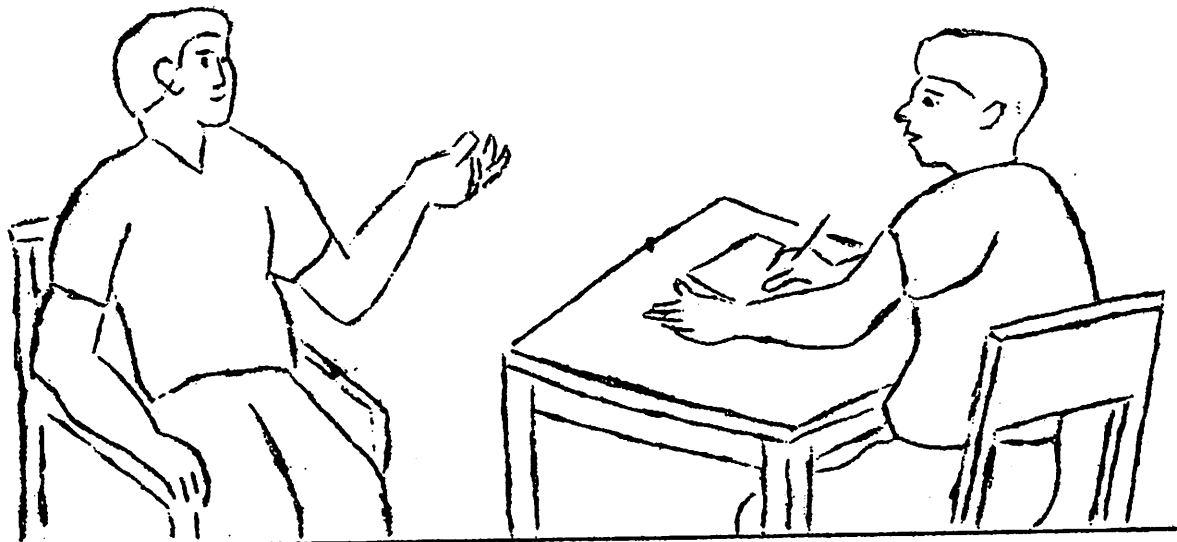
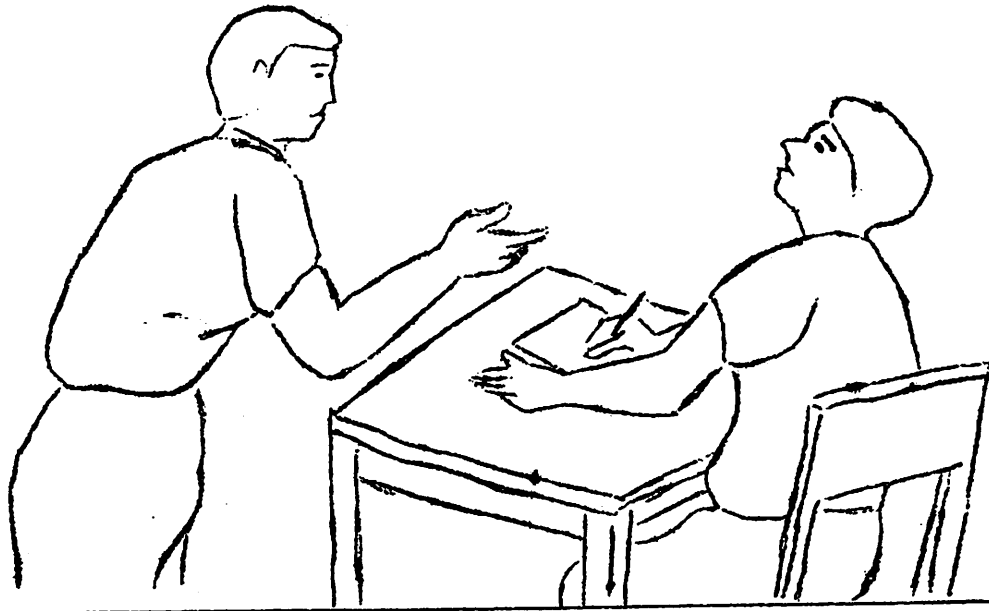
Cultural Explanation

Authority is vested in teachers to discipline pupils in school. Corporal punishment can be meted out with the consent of the head of the school. Troublesome pupils at home are also brought to school by parents for appropriate disciplinary measures. Some good parents visit schools to find out the progress and conduct of their children.

However, some parents detest corporal punishments for their children.

In School

- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| Parent: | Tisa buwae | Good morning teacher |
| Teacher: | Kini buwae bi sic
gbo jia a bie? | Good morning sir, how are you
what is your mission? |
| Parent: | Ngi wa nye loi lo
hinda hungbe ma | I've come to enquire about my
child |
| Teacher: | A gbe | What for |
| Parent: | Sia ngi yegelokoi na
sukuahun | About his progress and
behaviour in school |
| Teacher: | Bi loi biyei? | What is your child's name? |
| Parent: | Ngi laa Buakei Sama | His name is Bockarie Sama |
| Teacher: | Oo! ngi ngi goolo,
I nya klasihunlo
Ngi nemahun le ngo
Ke a sei waa glua
klasihun.
Nya pen nge gii
hungbe va a bie koo
bi ngi lahin | Ah! I know him, he is in
my class
He is very clever
But he is very playful in
class
Infact I was thinking of
telling you so that you will
warn him |
| Parent: | Tisa bi sic ka na le
ma na, nya logoi bi
kpoma ye nya ma ye
hindei ngihun, gbeva
ndoi ta numu yila
woo ii le. Ya yama
lawo ngi ma nahin a
we i luwa | Thank you very much, teacher,
only that I want you to help
me with this matter because
a child does not belong to
one person. Always keep an
eye on him so that he can
have some fear |



Teacher: Pa kulugoi ye ngaa Ngaa mua bie goyia ie? Nga yaa na a ngi yaabe	O.k. sir I hope it is a compromise between us. I will now keep watching him
Parent: Kc tamia tisa Ba ya a foo nyama	O.k. see you teacher Please be visiting me
Teacher: E-ye ke malo	Alright. See you

Alternate Forms

Gbe a ngendei	What is your mission this morning?
Gbe va	What for

Useful Expressions

Nya loi lo kaa madihuma?	Is my child serious over his work?
A waa suku wati gbi?	Does he come to school always?
Wua wu dei we ti wa a navo?	Did you ask them to bring money?
Ngi wa nya loi hunveima	I have come to obtain permission for my child
Bi loi ji yukpa go wa	Your child is very troublesome
Bi loi ii baa goo numu- gbima	Your child has no respect for anyone
Bi loi lo wa koc madihuma	Your child is very hard working/studies hard
Ya pie I ya humbu a wa sukuihun	See that he always comes to school very early

POSTPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITIONS

Postpositions generally occur after nouns, pronouns, nominal phrases and verbs, whereas prepositions occur before them.

Postpositions

In the following examples, the postpositions occur in final positions vis-a-vis after nouns and pronouns.

Bukui la tebi <u>ma</u>	Put the book on the table
Buakei lo pcc <u>woma</u>	Bockarie is behind the house
Nda nya gulo	Put it in front of me
Too ngi yakama	Place it by his side

Examples of some more postpositions.

Gblanga	Near	Kohun	Inside
Mahun	Top/upon	Nda	At
Mbu	In/into/under	We/vaa	For
Nduahun	Between	Ndia	Between/middle/among
Nga	On/at/in/from	Hun	In/from/to
Kakahun	Side	Woma	Behind
Gulo	Infront	Va	Of/for/to in infinitive mood

Bu and hun deserve special attention because they have several semantic equivalents in English, depending on the context in which they occur.

A)	Tia kpaahun	They are in the farm
	Sao gbuaa kpaahun	Sao has come from the farm
	Mu li kpaahun	Let us go to the farm

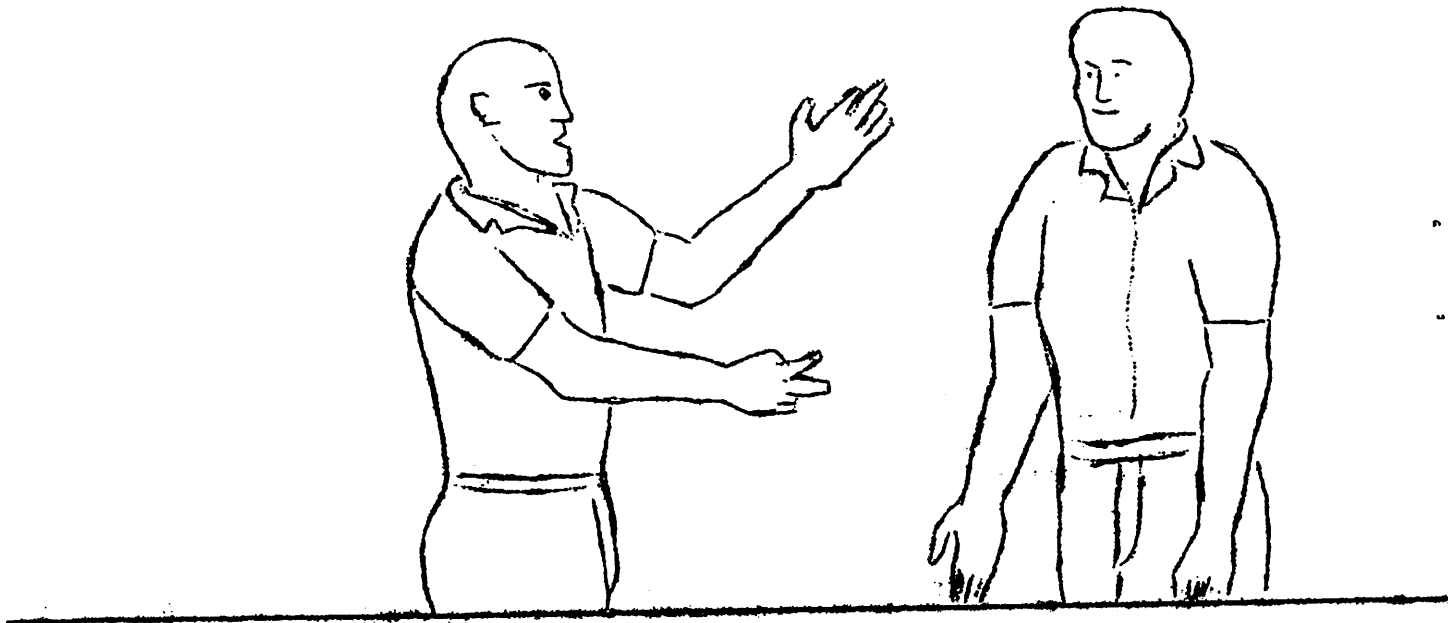
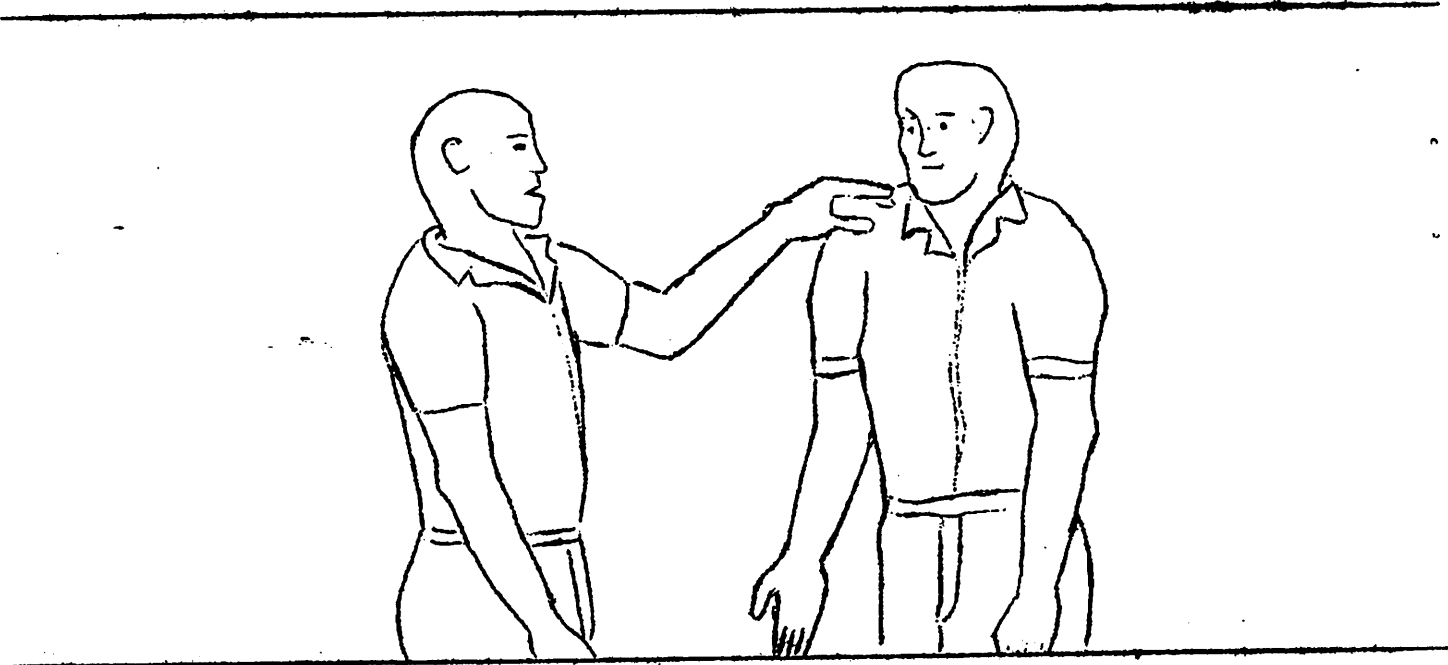
Hun from the above examples shows different shades of meaning depending on different grammatical contexts.

B)	Nya nyahei lo pce bu	My wife is in the house
	Baa li la pce bu	Don't take it into the house
	Ngi gbe pce bu	Drive him from the house
	Gone lo tibii bu	The cat is under the table

Note also that bu too can mean in, into, from and under depending on the grammatical context.

Prepositions

Only two prepositions are known a which roughly means with keleke which means except. A however has a much wider distribution.



LESSON THIRTEEN

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

DIALOGUE

- PCV: Jo, ndake galu lolc mia foihun? Joe, how many months are there in a year?
LH: Ngalu puumahun fele mia foihun There are twelve months in a year
- PCV: Ba gulo bi ti laagbawa Mende yeihun? Can you name them in Mende?
LH: Jo Yes
- PCV: Ke ti laa ge a nge Then please show them to me
LH: Wolo panda hoe Listen carefully
- PCV: Nga wolo ma, ke ba nde lo maleigo I'm listening, but please say it slowly
LH: Pcgbaa January
Vui February
Nyawolii March
Buwui April
Gooli May
Suejucci June
Nanci July
Dawii August
Saai September
Galoi October
Lugbuyawui November
Pondoi December
- PCV: Bi sie ka Thank you very much

DAYS OF THE WEEK

- PCV: Fo lolc mia hoki yilahun? How many days are there in a week?
LH: Fo wofila mia hoki yilahun There are seven days in a week
Tene Monday
Taalata Tuesday
Araba Wednesday
Aikamisa Thursday
Aijuma Friday
Sibiti Saturday
Lahadi Sunday

LESSON FOURTEEN

SWAMP RICE FARMING

DIALOGUE A

- PCV: Kini Omo buaa-e Hello Mr Momoh
LH: Mm, ndiamo bi sie Hello friend
- PCV: I yena, migbe mia bi How is it: when are you
kpete yegei latoma? starting the swamp work?
LH: Wati hintiama. Bia It's already time. I'm only
naalee ngi bi mawulo waiting for you to give me
ma ko bi nya lo pema some advice on the work
- PCV: Ke ba lilo naa bi You can now go ahead and brush
kpetei lue, bi gaa- your swamp, clear it and dig
yia, ki bi pujaa. it. Before starting, you will
Pen ba ya tato ba be ready for transplanting by
mbei saanilo, nahi- the time you finish digging
neve aa ye bi kpoyo your swamp
a bi gbetei wuja la
mbei gugo a yelanaa
hin va
- LH: Ba nya ngoo a mba Will you give me some?
huun wulo
- PCV: Gbei mba huun gbii Why don't you have some?
bi yeya? Yes
- LH: Oo
- PCV: Ke wa sina nga bi Then come tomorrow, I'll give
goo a mba huin you some
- LH: E-ye, ke nya sina O.k. then, I'll come tomorrow
wama

DIALOGUE B

- PCV: Kini Omo bianaa Afternoon Mr Momoh
LH: Sembejomui bi ye How is the day bigman?
luvei?
- PCV: Nya loo dedema. Bi I'm managing. How far have
ye gelia a kpete you gone with the swamp work?
yegei?
- LH: Mbei vaigoi naa, sina The rice has already germinated
yekei mia nga taato I'll start transplanting the
a hinla. Kpetei kpee day after tomorrow. The swamp
wuja goi naa is already dug

Some Useful Expressions/Rice Seasons

Po kpee	Time for cutting down large trees/felling time
Kpaa mo wati	Burning time
Mbawa kpee	Ploughing time
Gugbia kpee	Weeding time
Mbale kpee	Harvest season
Motu kpee	Period of waiting for first rain before ploughing
Mba wufoi	Newly ploughed land
Mba vai	Germinated rice
Lobai	Unploughed land
Giangle	Gathering and clearing of unburnt shrubs

Alternate Forms

Nyahagaa ti lolé bi yeya?
Nya nyahin yakpe

How many wives have you
I have only one wife

Useful Expressions

Nya nyahangaa ti loolu
Nya nyahin haa vonu
Nya nyahin ii ya ndo lei
Nya legaa ti nge lo

I have five wives
My wife died last year
My wife hasn't a child yet
This is my children's
mother

Nyaha ii nya yeya le

I don't have a wife yet

MEAL TIMES

Cultural Explanation

The Mendes have a communal lifestyle. They like to share what belongs to them with others especially strangers. Food is one of the basic things they always share. Their meal times are not divided into breakfast, lunch and dinner;

rather they eat mostly after the normal day's work on the farm. The meals at such times are usually very heavy. When there is communal labour on the farm, food is prepared for the workers which serves as lunch. In Mende, food prepared for workers is called kondei.

Certain etiquettes are observe during meal times.

- a) There should be no talking - children especially are strictly forbidden to talk while eating.
- b) Mendes hardly eat with spoons, so they should wash both hands properly before eating
- c) One should not grab too much food from the dish at a go
- d) One should not eat the meat in the food until it is shared, normally after eating
- e) No one is expected to extend his hand in front of another person while eating together
- f) No one is expected to eat at a faster rate, this will be gluttony

DIALOGUE

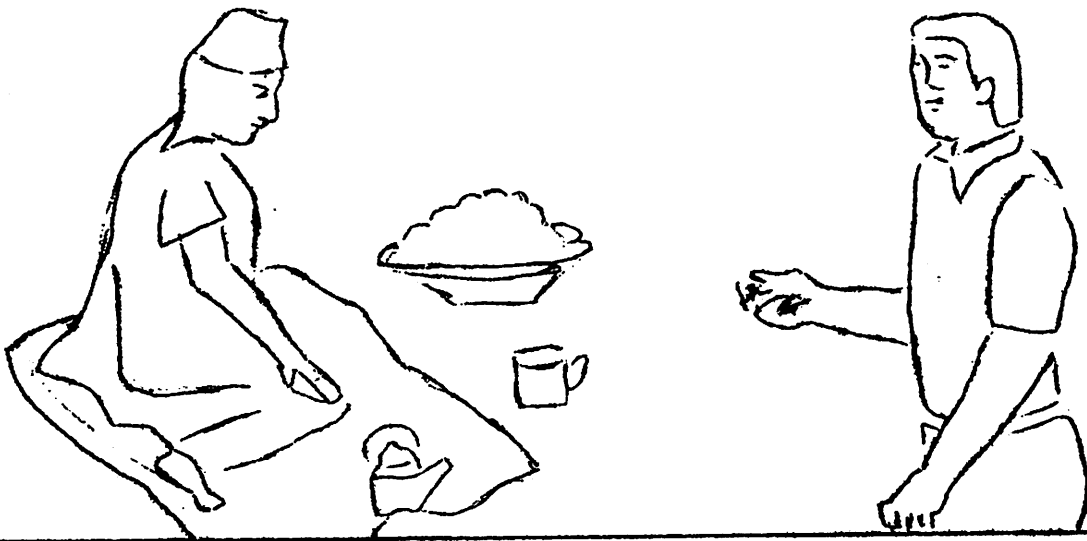
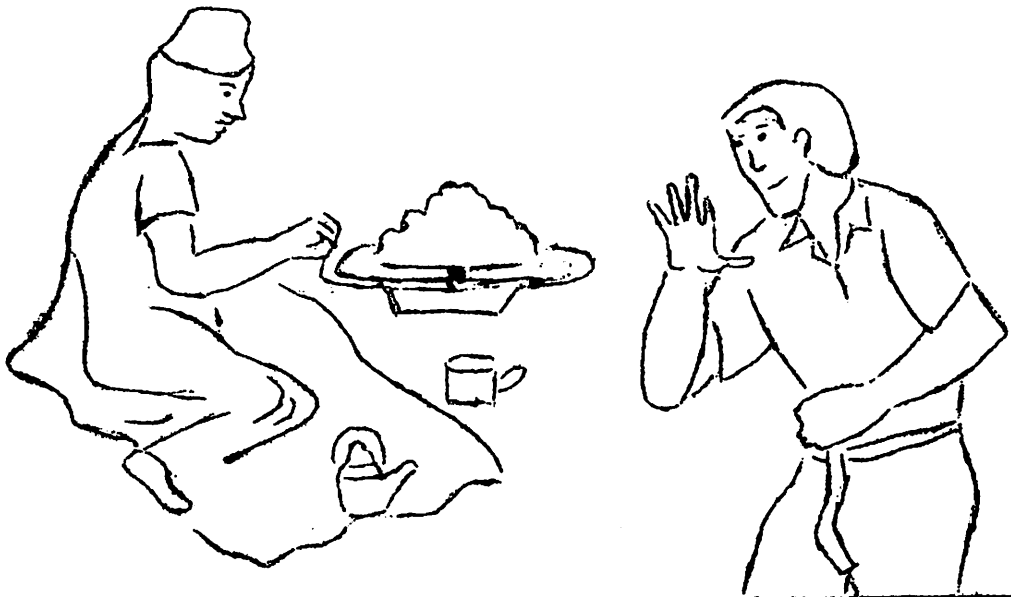
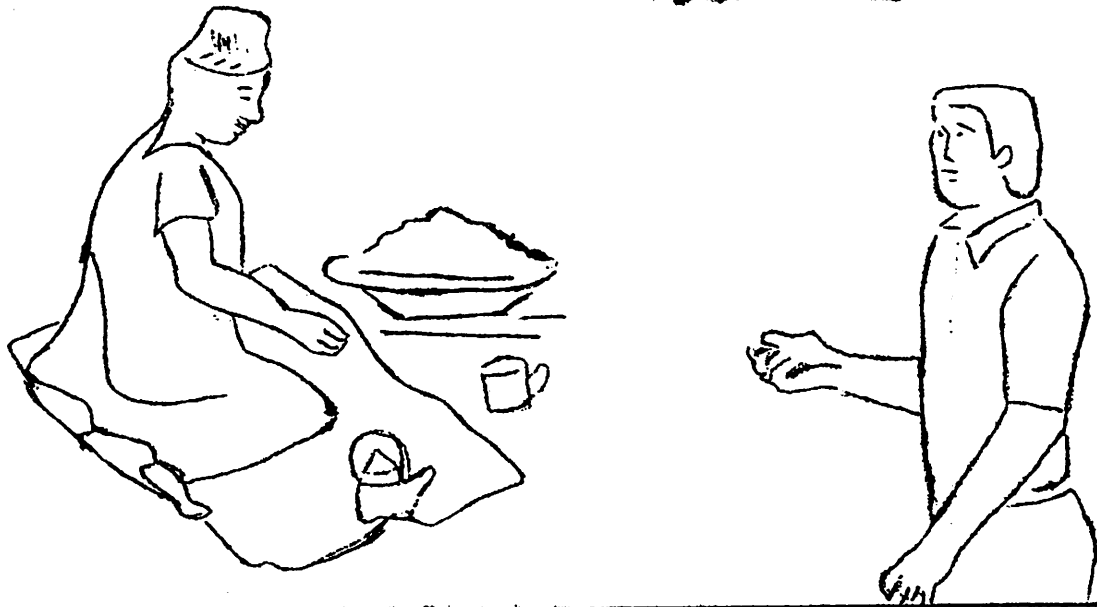
PCV:	Kini Blema biana	Goodday Mr Brima
LH:	Mm, ndiamo bi sis Wa mu mchen mee	Yea, goodday friend Come and let's eat
PCV:	Enen, ndake na gbategoi na	O.k. I'm alright now/I'm fed
LH:	Ndake, wa be ho bi kulo me	Man, come and have a bit at least
PCV:	Tonya mia, ke ndake genda mchen mia ha ngi mia, ye kove mia nya ma. Kone le i ye a wati yeka	That's true, but man, I have eaten some morning food today and I'm still fed. Please let it be another time
LH:	Mm, ngi humeinga ye	O.k. I've heard you
PCV:	Ke gbe ngi fo teihun nya wama	Let me go to town, I'll be back
LH:	E-ye, malo	O.k. see you

Alternate Forms

Nya govengoi	I'm alright/I'm fed
Nya foma teihun ngi wa	I'm going to town and back

Useful Expressions

Toko pepe	Taking food with your hands at a faster rate
Kavei	Taking too much food at one go
Bi liingo wa	You are gluttonous
Bi lamingo wa	You are gluttonous
Bi hataigo	You are gluttonous
Bi mchenhindago	You are gluttonous (never satisfied with food)
Bi nchengo wa	You like to stand by for people's food
Bi vofulango	You are voracious



Conjunctions

These act as "joining words"

Examples

Taa/ke - and

Shek taa Fled lo Mende bukui nyii
ma.
Sheik and Fred are writing the
Mende book.

Bia ke nya, mu li ma teihun.
You and I will go to town.

Bc - even, also, too

Ina bc i wei lo ngei li taahun.
Even if he comes I will not go to
town.
I will not go to town even if he
comes.

Jibe, kiabc - although

Mua li lo teihun kiabc njei i wama
We will go to town although it is
raining

Ngi maa lo Salon kiabc navo ii nya
yeya
I will go to town although I have no
money

Ina - if

Mua mu nda bei mce ina Ato ii
humbuni a wa
We shall eat our own rice if Arthur
does not come in time

Other Conjunctions

Ji, kia, kca: When, while, like

O: or

Ko: So that

Kele: Except

Jiva, tamia, famia, fale: Therefore

Interjections

These express emotions, excitements or emphasis.

Examples

O! Suffix - especially when calling out in a

loud voice to add emphasis
A muli O! - Let's go!

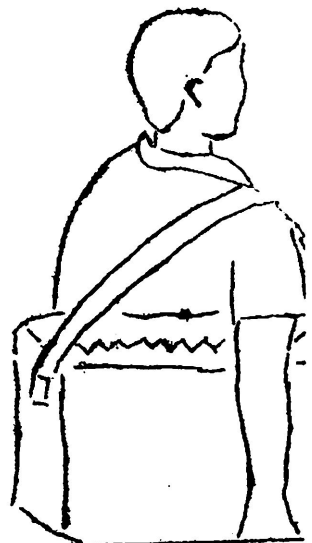
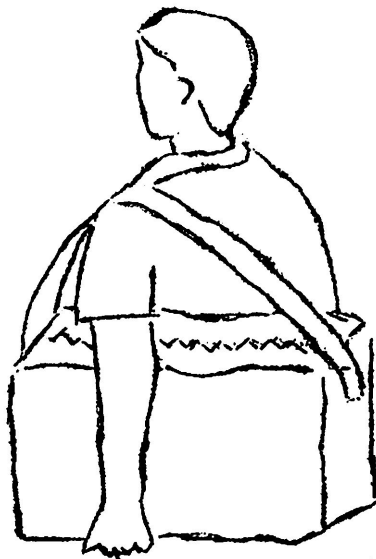
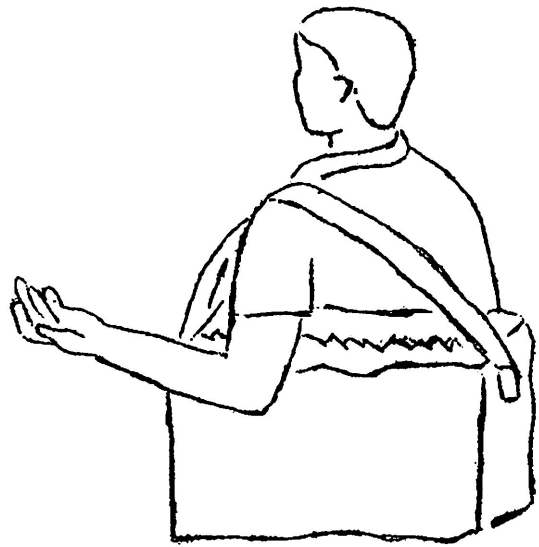
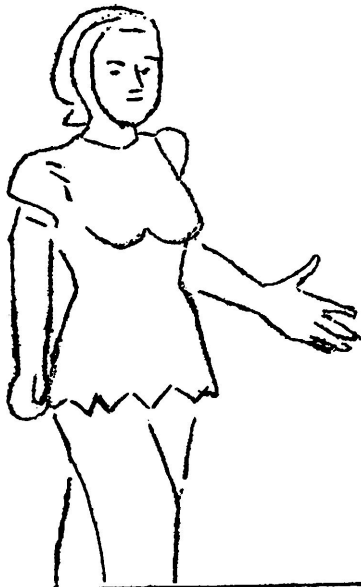
E! - Calling out names
Musa e!

Ko! Exclamation of surprise
Ko! ba ngi nya nyonaaye
Oh! I have wounded myself.

Aa ya! - also exclamation of surprise or regret

Hoe! - Emphasis - interrogative particle

Please/shall we



Useful Expressions

Migbe mia ba wa?	When will you come back?
Migbe mia ba yama?	When will you be returning?
Migbe mia ba li?	When will you go?
Migbe mia bi lima?	When will you be going?
Sina yekei mia ngi lima	I shall be going on the day after tomorrow
Sina yekei mia ngi li	I shall go on the day after tomorrow
Gbegi yekei mia ngi wani	I came on the day after yesterday
Ngi gbua le Makali lo	I am just coming from Makali
Nya hondei nyanilo ji	My honda brokedown when I was coming
ngi ye wama	
Motoi nyanilo a mue	Our vehicle brokedown

PROVERBS

Proverbs are wise sayings very common among the Mendes especially chiefs and elders. A great writer Chinua Achebe did say that "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten". They have sense and salt. They are mostly used for giving advice, settling disputes or giving warning.

Some Mende proverbs will be examined by stating them, giving their literal translations and their meanings. The context or instances where they can be used will be imagined from the given meanings.

1. Njei ba lehun ta ba lohun

The river you look low upon is the river that drowns you.
You should not take anything lightly

2. Numugbi ngi mama a lilo maagbou yopoihun

Everyone's grandmother must go to the plantain farm
Fortune can smile on anyone with time

3. Ndogbo gbii na ndo nyamu wiliva

There is no bush to throw a bad child.
No matter how bad a child is, he cannot be disowned by his parents.

4. Numu ii fefei gbuawe ngo a tee wei lekpe.

No one knows the direction of the wind that bends a fowls tail.
No one can tell the future, so one should be careful

5. Ti bi loingaa a huanamoi, ti bi lei male wee peema.
When they call you a witch/wizard, let them meet your mouth on the wall.
One is usually identified or classed according to one's behaviour.
6. Numu bi tei makenga a tcyawui, i njebia a wote a koti lo
If you tame a fowl with an egg, when it grows up it will become a stone.
If you pet your child, he will grow to become a defiant and disobedient child.
7. Nja nohon bee a ngombu lufelo.
Even dirty water can put off fire.
In the absence of something good, anything will do.
8. Njei a lo numu gohun lo i bali a nani
Water stays in one's stomach while one vomits blood.
One should reserve one's opinion on certain issues.
9. Hiwii bi loni a nyimi mevali a gbua bima.
A hill which does not want to be stepped on, should not grown edible mushroom.
If you desire respect, do not disrespect others.
10. Somi nyakui ma, kee ngi bloi lo kagahun.
A crab has sexual desires but its penis is locked in a box.
Sexual desires could be controlled by ethical codes.
11. Solc bakui ee taa loo.
Noisy weaver bird does not build a nest
Empty vessels make the most noise.
12. Ndoli na bii beni la baa kiula bi yemo wehun.
Don't start a dance you don't know at your mother-in-laws' house.
To avoid disgrace do not attempt doing anything you cannot do properly.
13. Ngomo lo a ngomo go.
A river gives a giver.
One good turn deserves another.

14. Beki wopi ee gu a loo.

An empty bag cannot stand.
One needs motivation or courage to drive on.

15. Tei a kpua ngi mbaa la lo a kpoi.

A fowl takes it from another fowl's beak and
swallows it.
Man live by man.

16. Kolu fele ee be gbanyi ya.

Two metals cannot fit on one anvil.
One cannot run after two things at the same time.

17. Pimeí a loto nyenyehun lo.

Running starts from fast walking.
Charity begins at home.

18. Kali ee nuu nyi kulo loova.

A snake does not bite you because you are walking
in front.
Destiny is inevitable.

19. Nja yila ee luva a bale gbua numu ma.

One river should not always take off one's trousers.
Too much of one thing is good for nothing.

20. Ndopo ee nu waa wumbu a loko yila.

A child does not take an elder with one hand.
Know your place.

21. Ngeya yaa bi ndeihun ndala.

When there is rope in your's, draw it.
Hit the nail when it is hot.

22. Mia ta nikei yili na, naa mia a meli na.

Where a cow is tied, that is where it feeds.
One benefits from one's status.

23. Ti ya ndopoma kpo lo tsuma, ye ii ya hinti kale ma.

When they tell a child there is faeces on a kernel, he
says it has not reached the nut.
Warning before wounded.

24. Sia ba bi gbukoi hun gbate, hin na ba la hun.

As you make your bed so shall you lie on it.
Your future is in your hand

25. Nchemo ee ngi liwe ga.

A begger for food does not show his taboo.
Beggars have no choice.

26. Kpandɛ yia i yia.

When a gun fires, it has fired.
What has been done cannot be undone.

27. Ngulu yila ee wola.

One tree cannot give many trees.
One tree cannot make a forest
Many heads are better than one.

28. Laa na ba male njei ya ta ba njei le la.

The paddle you meet at the river, is the paddle
you use to cross the river.
When you go to Rome, you do as the Romans do.
Anywhere you find yourself, you should take after
what the people do there.

29. Bi loi lo a buni baalo a ngi hun gaa.

If you don't like berry, don't like the seeds.
If you love a woman, you should also love her child.

30. Salc salc mia a li a soke kawoma.

A gradual movement takes the sparrow to the dustbin.
Little by little a bird builds its nest.
Every little effort contributes to a success.

STORIES

Stories are very important in the Mende culture. Most of the folklore normally depict various forms of human behaviour and their effects. It is therefore not uncommon that Mendees use stories when advising others or their children. Most of the Mende stories have moral lessons.

A lot of animal characters are usually used in stories based on the various habits of these creatures.

'Kasiwulo' (the spider) is renowned as a very greedy animal. The spider is therefore used in narrating stories related to greed.

'Hagbewulo' (the hare) is used to depict cunningness. Other common animals used in stories are 'haku' (tortoise), 'ndovo' (frog) and 'ngla' (dog).

The general purposes of story telling then are to entertain, amuse and to teach morals. We have endeavoured to include two stories of great repute in this manual. More stories will be narrated by Mende language trainers as the need arises.

Kasiwulo Tia Fula Naanisia

Story Teller: Domio, domiosia

Listeners: Jia a kcdc

Story Teller:

Wati yilama meheme gomengaa ti yee fula naanahun. Ye fula naanisia kpele ti ngowi willi lo kasiwulo ngama ko i be ye komijisia ma.

Ji kasiwulo ngowijisia humenini, i ngi lengaa kpele leiloma i nde tima ti li ti ngeya naaningaa lewe. Ngi lengeisia ti lilo ti ngeyeijisia lewe ti wa a tie ti ti ve ti keke we. Kia jumei ye hintima, kasiwulo tia ngi lengaa naanisia ti lilo a peleina i toma fula naani jisiahun. Ti lilo han ke ti fo nga pela gbuama naani a i to ma fula naanisia ma. Ke Kasiwulo ndenga ngi lengaa ma ko ti ngeya naanisia gblo ngi lia. I nde ti ma ye numu gbi i li fula yilahun. Ti ti keke loi loni jonsoilaa ngeya naani gblo ngo ngi lia.

Ji leke seifani hintini ke i biama fula naani-jisia kpele ti totonga a mehen mela lenga. Ji wie ngoo ke ngi lenga ti totonga a ngeyei laalala. Ti ngeyei jisia laaleilo han kasiwulo ii ngui aa li fuleijisia ye ngla behun a jifa ngi lengeisia ti yelo a ngi laala hungbi. Na wie lo na ke ngi lie ya lengi-lengi, i loi kulohin ko i haa.

Jinaa ngi lengeisia ni ngi laalanga han ti ngi loi, ke ti yamanga hungbe va ina gbo ti keke wienga. Ji ti wei ti maleni i longa kulohin ko kasiwulo i haa a jifa ngi lie yelo lengi-lengi tawa gboma ii ye ngu a levu. Gama gamina ti ngi vuloi lo kaaka ti li a ngie fuleihun. I hiye folei na ma wo kasiwulo lia genyeni folei jibe kasiwulo gbi le ngitie ya kulohin.

Listeners: Gbo ji ye mbui le?

Story Teller: Mchen hinda ma ii neni

Translation - Spider and the Four Villages

At one time there were four big feasts in four vilages. All the four villages sent messages to spider so that he will be present at these gatherings.

When spider heard th messages, he summoned his four sons and told them to go and cut four ropes. His four sons went and cut the ropes and brought them to their father. When Friday was approaching, spider and his four sons took the road leading to the four villages. They went on until they arrived at a junction with roads leading to the four villages. Then spider told his four sons to tie the four ropes round his waist. He told each of them to go to one of the villages. They left their father at the junction with the four ropes tied round him.

When it was about time for the afternoon prayers (2pm), it coincided that all four villages started eating together. As soon as this happened, his four sons started drawing the rope. They drew the rope together so much that spider could not go to any one of the villages. Then his waist became very thin, so much that he almost died.

When his sons drew him so long without seeing him they went to find out what has happened to their father. When they came they found out that spider was almost dead because he was nearly cut into two and he was unable to breath. They immediately untied him and took him to the village. Since that day spider's waist became thin; since then every other spider has a very thin waist.

Listeners: What is the meaning of that?

Story Teller: Gluttony is not good

NDAKPU NYANDE

Story Teller: Domio, domiosia

Listeners: Jia a kode

Story Teller:

Fula yila ye wo na ta toi a Jomu. Ye fulei ji hun nyahan lo nyande go wa yelona (ngi la Mesi). Hingaa gboto, kongaa O kpakogaa O ti ye Jomu ti loni lo a ye ndopoi ji hei va. Ke ji ti ngi wani sandehun, ti ngi gbua, ii lumani ahindo gbi jaye teijihun. Ji ti ngi molini, i nde lo ye i ya ngi lima hindo loni.

Jomu i yeni a taa lo wo mia ndowei a hei na jumagbi. Juma yila ma, mesi i ye jopowahunlo (makitihun) makiti majiamei ke i ndakpou nyandengo wa longa. Ndakpe ji longo O ke i gbengbanga wa ngi va. Ha kpo i hiyei lo mia i ye hei na ke i totonga a tola ndakpejima. I loilo toma ngima han ndakpe i kpojo a fee ngola. Ji na ndakpe ji totoni a yama la ngi ye, ke i tonga ke mesi lo loi ngi woma. Ke i ngi molinga ye 'gbe nyande bi loi lee nya woma'? Ke mesi i ndenga ye ngi longo a ngie ko tia ta ta hii. Ke ndakpe ndenga ngima ye nyande bi nya ngo, bi nya longa lee be bi longo a nge? Konele vama. Mesi i woloni dahinjima, ke i tonga huen tamui jima.

I toi lo ngi ma ti li polon dogbohun, ti foina hinda lenga lo ke ndakpou nyandei ji i totonga a ngi magbua la. A wati ji mia lee na i koni ke figafa mia a ndakpeji. Ji woma na i luwei lo wa. Ti lonilo lima Tamui ji i ngi magbua i lolee a kale gbama. Kia mesi ji hun loni ke i lewenga a piimi, i wiimi lo hannii, ke ngafe ji ngi huilo huen. I lilo a ngi i ngie me.

Listeners: Gbo ji ye mbui le?

Story Teller: Nghun gbonda ma ii neni

Translation - A Handsome Youngman

There was once a village called Johmu. In this village there was a very beautiful girl called Mesi. Many men, young as well as old who were in Johmu wanted to marry this young girl. But when she was initiated into the Bondo society, she did not agree to marry any man in this town. When they asked her why? She said she has not seen her choice.

Johmu was a town where a big market day was held every Friday. One Friday Mesi was selling in the market when she saw a very handsome youngman. As soon as she saw this man, she fell over heels for him. She at once left her seat and started following this man. She followed him until the man finished shopping. When the man started heading back for his home, he found out that Mesi was following him. Then he asked her "Why are you following me my dear?" Mesi told him that she wants him to be her husband. Then the man told her that 'you don't know me, you have just seen me and now you propose marriage to me. Please go back'. Mesi did not listen to this warning, but insisted on following the guy. She followed her until they went far away into the bush. When they arrived somewhere, this handsome man started undressing. Only then that she knew the man was a devil. After this she became very frightened. They went on until the man completely changed to a skeleton. When Mesi saw this, she ran away, she ran, and ran but the devil caught her. He took her away and ate her.

Listeners: What is the meaning of this?

Story Teller: Stubbornness is not good.

SOME MORE USEFUL PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS

MENDE

Gbe ngi wa
Nya mawo kulo
Wa mui
Ngi wa mui?
Ndi mia bi pie ma?
Bi ya nga va ngi ma hoe

Bi totoa a mchec yiila?

Njei ji a gulo bi va

Bi ya ge milo?
Woogba ngi ya foi na
Saange mia ngi gbua na
Ngii ya ha a ngi loi
Pol lo mbi?
Hiye na
A gbua gitiya
Baa luwa nya ma
Baa woo
A longo
Gbe nya ma
Baa nya vawei
Baa ndce gula nya ma
Bii makei
Hei panda
Ngi lima a gooma welo
Nya longo a ye pekei
Waa a peka
Ii na
Taa na
Lampoi longa
Kele ngi to
Koncle nde gboma
Ti ge a nge
Bi humenga?
Yembui a gboo?
Ta ye boi ji loi Mende yie hun
Bia ii le/Bia ya na
Bii ya kpoyoi le?
Ngi kpoyoa
Ti bi lei mi lo?
Wa mbe kaka
Wu keke yakpe?
Nji main lo nya ma
Nja gboemei lo nya ma
Wa a njei ngi kpoe
Wa a njei ngi mua
Baa lema ba
Baa lema nya ma

ENGLISH

Wait till I come
Wait for me a little
Come let's go
Shall I come with you?
Are you going?
When you go extend my
greetings to him/her
Have you started cooking the
food?
Will this water be enough
for you?
Where did you go recently
I have never been there
I have just left there
I have not seen him today
Is Paul here?
Get up from there
Go outside all of you
Don't be afraid of me
Do not cry
Be quiet
Leave me alone
Do not disturb me
Don't lie on me
You have no manners
Sit carefully/sit properly
I am going on foot
I want the other one
Bring another one
He/she/it is not there
He/she/it is there
Light the lamp/lantern
Let me see it
Please say it again
Show them to me
Have you understood?
What is its meaning?
How is this called in Mende
Not you
Haven't you finished it yet?
I have finished (it)
Where were you born?
Come here quickly
Do you have the same father?
I am sleepy
I am thirsty
Bring me some water to drink
Bring me some water to bathe
Don't forget it
Don't forget me

Baa nde nuu gbi ma
Baa ngi lee
Baa nyani, fe mbe

Baa nya nemu
Baa kputa
Baa mbo
Baa nya loi a pumoi
Nya la yana
Konele mavula
Ba jaa la
Baa yaa gbiti ma
Baa ngeya
Baa li na
Wa bi lo nya gulo

I ye na?
Wasi ye gbe
Gbe le?
Bi toa?
Nya gbe
Nga ye pie?
Ndomei na bengo bi ma
Ngi lli nyaningo na va
Mendemo mia vui a bie?
Mua ta mu loa ha

We kpee ii le (yana)
Mu venjo kpee
Yeklemayei
Yesembei
Yehaaleyeyi
Ndondoii lo nya ma
Ngi nyahei lo koihun
Mu li baa la

Don't tell anyone
Don't beat him
Don't spoil it, give it
to me
Don't wound me
Don't burst it
Don't dig it
Don't call me whiteman
That's not my name
Please hurry up
Don't touch it
Don't touch it again
Don't buy it
Don't go there
Come and stand in front
of me
How is it?
What time is it?
What is it?
Have you seen it?
Here I am/Look at me
How can I do it?
That shirt suits you
He is sad for that
Are you a true Mende man?
We have seen each other
today
Not all of you
Both of us
The last one
The big one
The first one
I am feeling hot
His wife is pregnant
Let's go to the bar

GLOSSARY

Parts of the body

Dii	- Heart	Dihun galei	- Backbone
Gowohini	- Big toe	Gowowoma	- Tendon at
Gombui	- Lower part	late	back of foot
	of belly	Gowoyui	- Toe
Gbatoi	- Back teeth	Gbowi	- Ankle
Hamei	- Hip/waist	Hakai	- Calf
Hok pui	- Navel	Jovotei	- Testicles
Takei (yakei)	- Rib	Kale (gale)	- Backbone
Kowe (gowe)	- Foot/leg	Kowolokoi	- Left hand
Kpaki	- Shoulder/	Kpale	- Thigh
	upper arm	Kpambui	- Armpit
Kpele	- Beard	Kponi	- Brain
Kponi	- Penis	Kpokpoe	- Chin
Lagui	- Lip	Lokovele	- Palm
Lokoyui	- Finger	Lokohini	- Thumb
Mbulei	- Neck	Mbule	- Penis
Ngami	- Face, eye	Ngama gbekei	- Eyebrow/
Ngombi	- Knee		eyelash
Njombui	- Hair of body	Ngengalui	- Fingernail
Ngundiei	- Hair of head	Ndenge	- Pubic Hair
Ndate (late)	- Vein	Ngonge	- Back of head
Nyeni	- Liver	Nyini	- Breasts
Ngoli	- Ear	Nokoi	- Elbow
Kole	- Skin	Kowodigbi	- Heel
Tokoi	- Hand	Koi/goi	- Belly
Ngotui	- Buttocks	Yejalokoi	- Right hand
Pomei (womei)	- Back	Ndimei	- Chest
Yakei	- Side		

Trees, Plants, etc.

Nguli	- Tree	Kpiti	- Grass
Foni	- Elephant grass	Ngale	- Very tall
Kowui	- Wood		coarse
Tife	- Leaf, twig		grass
Mbekei	- Branch	Ndawei	- Leaf
Nyui	- Corn	Kale	- Seed
Kowoi	- Fallen tree	Pote	- Millet
Hewe wuli	- Tree with a	Koji	- Garden eggs
	medicinal	Njawuli	- Soap tree/
	fruit		see apple
Yogui	- Tree (stains	Yolui	- Fibrous of
	cloth)		<u>nduvui</u>
Nguwe	- Silk cotton	Bowuli	- Baobab
	tree	Kpedei	- Red hardwood
Tijoi	- Hardwood with		tree
	fibrous bark	Mbeli	- Hardwood
Semi	- A big forest		tree with
	tree		buttress

Mbei	- Rice	Nyokoe	- Sugar cane
Kpole	- Egg plant	Keti	- Guinea corn
Mambui	- Tree with soft nuts, edible	Kpatoi	- A kind of wild walnut
Buni	- Baboon apple tree	Gboji	- Tree with yellow palm like fruit with pleasant taste
Goyavei	- Guava	Yumbu yambe	- A tree with red fruit, size of an apple, rough skin, red inside
Lumbe	- Orange tree		
Boboe	- Funtania		
Jenje	- A rubber vine		
Koboe	- A rubber tree		
Houlei	- Tree with juice used for catching birds		

Reptiles, Fish, etc.

Nyi	- Fish	Kenj gui	- Tree snake, thin with brown stripes
Ndili	- Python	Nguli	- Black snake
Ndovo kpoli	- Poisonous small fat snake 1ft long	Ndambe	- Crocodile
Ndawudu gali	- Green snake	Koli	- Red-headed lizard
Pami	- Iguana	Kogo-njei	- Slow worm; head at each end, tail same shape as head
Kpcni	- Speckled lizard	Ndovoi	- Toad
Ndokuli	- Chameleon	Kpegbi	- Croaking frog
Ngakui	- Crab	Banasowe	- Fleshy coloured climbing frog
Jiben	- Bull-frog	Hakui	- Turtle
Gbasonde	- Green tree frog	Bonge	- Bonga
Kondui	- Small fish found in mangrove swamps	Tumui	- Shark
Kenji	- Fresh water flying fish		
Kali	- Snake		
Tupui	- Puff-adder		

Birds

Kokogbie	- Grey eagle	Sekuli	- Small speckled hawk
Sekpendei	- Grey hawk		- chases small birds/ chickens
Yibe	- Vulture		
Gomi	- Black & white crow	Sasaloi	- Red-legged partridge. Feeds more at night
Kpovovui	- Green pigeon		
Gowai	- Clock-bird		
Kpiangbie	- Hornbill		
Mbakui	- Weaver bird		

Powi	- Pigeon	Hokei	- Guinea fowl
Bomukuli	- Dove	Kokoye	- Bush fowl
Fabui	- Parrot	Fokuloi	- Small brown partridge.
Kakiboi	- King fisher		Feeds on ground
Teehini	- Cock		
Dowui	- Duck		
Bogbotoi	- Turkey	Gule	- Toucon-two headed bird
Yonemgbe	- Egret; body white, beak yellow	Nduli	- Brown bird with white breast and mournful cry
Kowe	- Large black and white eagle		
Geli	- Brown fish hawk	Tei	- Fowl
		Tectoi	- Chicken
Kingi	- Grey wading bird	Mbui	- Owl

Palms

Tokpoi	- Palm tree	Nduvui	- Raffia, vinifera
Semi	- Bamboo		
Keni	- Bamboo	Keli	- Sharp-leaved palm
Kaavui	- Rattan		
Puloli	- Coconut palm	Mbalui	- Cane
Kewe	- Fan palm	Ngavui	- Inferior date palm

Products of Palm

Towui	- Oil palm nut	Kajui	- Fruit of raffia
Kaje	- Piassava		
Tokpo nyinii	- Flower of oil palm	Koni	- Raffia cane
Tokpo loi	- Palm wine	Dangule	- Palm kernel oil
Kale	- Kernel	Ngulo gboi	- Palm oil

Plants/Flowers, etc

Taavukei	- Snuff	Tawe	- Tobacco
Kamaamei	- A plant with coarse leaves used for sand paper	Kpule	- A large gourd
		Njowe	- A large poisonous bean
Nengbe	- A water lily with round leaves	Mbolui	- A creeper used to make a loop to climb palm trees
Foni	- A plant used for making baskets (giant elephant grass)	Fande wui	- Cotton plant
		Dawoi	- Wild palm
		Fali	- Mushroom/fungus

Animals

Huei	- Animal	Njii	- Goat
Nika hei	- Bull	Kooli	- Leopard
Mbale	- Sheep	Nguanhi	- Small animal like guinea pig
Ndonde	- Pig		
Kowi	- Jackal	Pekuli	- Small animal; sharp nose and mouth set underneath
Sugbui	- Hyena		
Njao	- Lion	Kuwuli	- Big spotted bush cat. Hair rather than fur
Kaikuli	- A ground squirrel		
Ndandakuli	- Mongoose	Nyangbe	- Bush cat; soft fur, spotted
Pewi	- Bush cat; long tail		
Gone	- Cat	Kanyi	- Ant-eater
Tewei	- Bush goat	Tewui	- Bush cow
Hagbei	- Weasel	Ngile	- Dog
Nyini	- Rat	Kiwuli	- Ground pig
Lendoi	- Mouse	Sewuli	- Guinea pig
Bovi	- Wood squirrel	Dadei	- Bat/small
Gulei	- Baboon	Taje	- Bat/medium
Towe	- Big black monkey with long tail	Hele	- Elephant
Nyomui	- Gorilla		
Ndope	- Antelope/deer		
Nike	- Cow		

Insects

Fuhani	- Insects in general	Kpowivofoi	- Beetle that rolls a ball of dung
Foi	- Big biting fly	Ndondoi	- Millipede
Komi	- Bee	Kalondoi	- Centipede
Siloi	- Spider	Pundi	- Mosquito
Kekemi	- Scorpion	Hingboi	- wasp
Kowongaa	- Driving ants	Ngili	- White ants
Petui	- Graspopper	Koli	- Snail
Kpakpadei	- Dragon fly	Pupui	- Small ants
Kongowetui	- Grey stripped locust not hurtful	Kimbui	- A big edible cricket
Kpekpele	- Caterpillar	Kondui	- Locust - destructive kind
Kpindiyiei	- Cicada	Kpekpei	- Cockroach
Lelemi	- Prayingmantis	Jike	- Jigger
Divovoi	- Fly that bores holes in trees and bites	Fuvui	- Borer
Ndi	- Fly	Fofoi	- Moth
Jokondi	- Tarantala	Gbawe	- Big white grub in oil palm

Spiritual Terms

Ngewo	- God	Ndobleisia	- Inhabitants of the lower world
Ngelegohun	- Heaven		
Ngelemahun	- Land of living	Ngafe	- Spirit; abstract or material
Ndoo	- Lower world		
Haiwai	- Devil, spirit		

Natural Features

Kpeteihun	- Swamp with running water	Tumbeke	- Stars
Fofowaihun	- Large clearing in the bush	Batihun	- Swamp
Popawai	- Large lake	Fofoi	- Clearing
Kpundohun	- West	Ngiyei	- Hill
Kpolilei	- River mouth, entrance in the man-grooves	Pope	- Pond
		Ko	- East
		Bulomi	- Flat ground
		Bulihun	- Ground raised above water
		Kpoli	- River

Furniture/Utensils

Tibi	- Table	Pului	- Pillow
Kpukoi	- Bed	Kaja	- Box
Tenti	- Mosquito net	Ndivali	- Broom/fly brush
Kpangbe	- Broom	Mite	- Spoon
Fei	- Pot	Mbowe	- Knife
Foki	- Fork	Glasi	- Glass
Sani	- Bottle	Pleti	- Plate
Bole	- Cup	Meme	- Mirror
Kalui	- Basin	Kloki	- Clock
Fajii	- Bucket	Kpegbe	- Wooden comb used by women
Wasi	- Watch		
Komui	- English comb	Konde	- Mortar
Sambe	- Broad open basket	Gitii	- Pestle
Ngale	- Mat	Mbogbe	- Cutlass
Kogbe	- Hammer	Hipoi	- Heavy hammer
Kpatoi	- Axe	Gbanyi	- Pincers
Bume	- Gimlet	Kali	- Hoe
Sowi	- Saw	Goli	- Scissors
Londimi	- Nail	Ndoli	- Hook
Hewui	- Seat		

Metals

Kani gboli	- Gold	Tongoi	- Brass
Kani goli	- Silver	Koli	- Iron
Tongoboli	- Copper	Sumbui	- Lead

Colours

Kole	- White	Teli	- Black
Bulu	- Blue	Telingo	- It is black
Ngahunpui	- Assorted/ variegated	Kpou	- Red/brown
		Punch	- Green

Other Useful Words

Sewesewe	- Very clean	ŋdembi	- Delay
Kpakpawui	- Ladder	Ndogboi	- Bush
Juumbui	- Sin	Kaye(gaye)	- Confession
Juumbumei	- Sinner	Nanyei	- Sound
Kpongbo	- Pound/grind/ iron	Mbilii	- Drum
Yemol	- Mother-in-law	Tavei	- Pipe
Mbilei/ Mblei	- Father-in-law	Koti	- Stone
Kpongbo	- Pound/grind/ iron	Kawo	- Peel
		Pawei	- Payment/pay/ noun

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