

## Tɔmmɔ-Sɔ Fieldwork

I began fieldwork on the Tɔmmɔ-Sɔ language at the beginning of June 2008 with no prior exposure to Dogon languages. The dialect I am documenting is that of the commune of Tédié /téédzé/, though the language itself is spoken in six other communes with but slight dialectal differences. Time allowing, I will carry out a brief survey of these other dialects in spring of 2009.

My fieldwork thus far has been a mixture of lexical, grammatical, and cultural work. Most of the elicitation done over the summer was aimed at understanding the core of the grammar, through paradigms and the elicitation of full sentences. This work was mainly carried out in Douentza with Ramata Ouologuem, an 18-year-old speaker from the village of Tongo-Tongo /tòŋtòŋó/, capital of Tédié.

Once a month, I make a short trip (usually 5 or 6 days) to Tongo-Tongo. These trips have several aims: 1) to take pictures and videos to illustrate the lexicon, 2) to gather plant and insect specimens along with their names, 3) to fill in sections of the lexicon containing cultural vocabulary such as calabashes or farming techniques, and 4) to take part in Tɔmmɔ culture, speak the language, and get to know the people. However, the village having no electricity, it is not practical as a work base, since any equipment must be able to run on battery power alone.

After a month-long break in the United States, I returned to Mali at the end of September. With Ramata in school, I now work mainly with her father, former mayor of Tédié, Sana Ouologuem. The division of time for each month is as follows: two weeks of elicitation with Sana in Douentza, five days in Tongo-Tongo, and the other two weeks split between working on my own (analyzing, organizing, writing) and working with M. Guindo, a speaker of Tɔmmɔ-Sɔ from Sarédina who lives in Douentza. Though there are allegedly small differences in vocabulary between Sarédina and Tédié, M. Guindo speaks both varieties and points out where there are differences. As a safety measure, I also note what work has been done with him as opposed to the others, should more subtle differences in areas such as tone come to light.

The months of October to January are to be mainly devoted to completing the lexicon, along with small amounts of grammatical elicitation as issues come up in the course of working on the grammar. The remaining four months will be dedicated to text transcription and heavy work on writing the grammar. Texts gathered will include stories, songs, histories, and explanations of different processes, such as food preparation. My departure will be May 20, 2009.

My goal is to continue analysis of Tɔmmɔ-Sɔ and to do some comparative work when at graduate school at UCLA. Hopefully, I will be able to return to Mali in the future to continue working either on Tɔmmɔ-Sɔ and its dialects or other related languages.

Below is a tentative timeline of my work, showing when new materials can be expected online, though the grammar will be a work in progress the whole year as new data is gathered:

End of November:	Chapter 3 – Phonology
End of January:	Lexicon
End of February:	Chapters 4-7 – Nominal/Adjectival morphology, Nominal compounds, NP structure, Coordination
End of March:	Chapters 8, 12 – Postpositions and Adverbials, comparatives
Mid-May:	Chapters 9-10 – Verbal derivation and inflection
End of August:	Chapters 11, 13-17 – VP and predicate structure, focalization and interrogation, relativization, VP chaining and adverbial clauses, conditional constructions, complement and purposive clauses

These dates are subject to change, as work has a tendency to choose its own course. Chapters may be posted in an incomplete but coherent form to give the reader the basics of a given grammatical domain, even if fine details have yet to be worked out. This fine-tuning will be a process that knows no end.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments throughout the year. Insight is always appreciated.

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