Peace Corps
Sierra Leone
Mende Language Manual
MENDE MANUAL

Alhaji Sheik Kuyateh
Frederick Conteh
# Table of Contents

- Acknowledgement ............................................. 1
- Introduction .................................................. 2
- Historical Background To the Tribe ....................... 2
- Political and Social Organization ......................... 3
- Mende Orthography ........................................... 4
- Numerals ....................................................... 5
- Basic Greetings ............................................... 8
- Asking for the Chief ......................................... 10
- Nouns .......................................................... 11
- Number ........................................................ 12
- The Agentive Form ........................................... 13
- Pronouns ....................................................... 14
- Introducing Oneself ......................................... 17
- Asking About One's Family .................................. 19
- Pronouns ....................................................... 21
- Identifying Objects ........................................... 23
- Bargaining ..................................................... 25
- Introducing a Friend ......................................... 27
- Verbs .......................................................... 28
- Transportation ............................................... 32
- Tenses ........................................................ 34
- Consonant Mutation .......................................... 36
- Health ........................................................ 39
- Seasons/Climate .............................................. 41
- Adverbs ......................................................... 42
- Ideophones .................................................... 43
- Adjectives ..................................................... 44
- Emphatic Functions .......................................... 45
- Fish Farmer .................................................... 47
- School Situation .............................................. 49
- Postpositions and Prepositions ............................ 50
- Months of the Year .......................................... 52
- Swamp Rice Farming ......................................... 53
- Polygamy ....................................................... 56
- Meal Times .................................................... 57
- Back From a Trip .............................................. 61
- Proverbs ....................................................... 62
- Stories ......................................................... 66
- Useful Phrases and Expressions ............................. 70
- Glossary ....................................................... 72
- References .................................................... 78
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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.

What we now have as a Language and Cultural Manual is the product of many human and material resources. We therefore wish to express our profound gratitude to the following people for giving us some valuable information and advice:- Mr Joe Abu, a Senior Health Inspector in Kenema, a typical Mende who is a renowned hunter; Yea Mamie Conte, an experienced old woman resident in Bo who deals in herbs for curing various diseases. We are also thankful to the staff of the Bunumbu Press in Bo (Provincial Literature Bureau) who gave us materials and guidelines, and for also going through the script.

We owe our obligations to Dr. Joko Sengova, Head of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) and Mr Joseph Opala of the Department of the Institute of African Studies (Fourah Bay College) for using valuable information from their lectures. We should also commend the Language/Culture Coordinator, Mr Swaray Conte who proposed the updating of the previous manual. Nothing could have been achieved without the relentless efforts, concern and interest of the Programming Training Officer, Dr. Nanette Hegamin. We were moved and inspired by her continuous coaching and academic advice. We should also be thankful to Miss Kadie Kamara who typed the manuscripts.

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 Conte
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; Kpâe 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 Kpâe 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 Kailahun 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 ‘Konde’ 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 Kòo - Bo, Kenema, Pujehun. They look upon themselves as the purest Mende speaking group.

C) **Kòo 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. ‘Ndómaheí’ (Paramount Chief) has wide ranging powers although with colonial rule and independence these powers have been considerably undermined and eroded. Before colonial rule, the Maheí (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 Mendes 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; Njayei 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 Mendes 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b</th>
<th>- Bafa</th>
<th>- hut</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>- polc</th>
<th>- house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>- dawa</td>
<td>- leaf</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>- tce</td>
<td>- fowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>- folo</td>
<td>- sun</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>- vonu</td>
<td>- last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>- genda</td>
<td>- morning</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>- kali</td>
<td>- hoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb</td>
<td>- gbale</td>
<td>- hurt</td>
<td>kp</td>
<td>- kpate</td>
<td>- make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>- haku</td>
<td>- tortoise</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>- jaka</td>
<td>- male lizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>- loli</td>
<td>- dance</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>- nava</td>
<td>- money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>- maana</td>
<td>- plantain</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>- wala</td>
<td>- wooden state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mb</td>
<td>- mba</td>
<td>- rice</td>
<td>nd</td>
<td>- ndamba</td>
<td>- crocodile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng</td>
<td>- ngeli</td>
<td>- thorn</td>
<td>nj</td>
<td>- nja</td>
<td>- water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ny</td>
<td>- nyani</td>
<td>- spoil</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>- gama</td>
<td>- blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>- sani</td>
<td>- bottle</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>- yabasi</td>
<td>- onion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vowels**

Mende has seven vowels

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

Long vowels should be doubled in writing.

E.g.:  
- paa - kill
- kpaa - farm
- Looju - 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, kisihun.
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
       Ndovo - frog Nyoko - sugar cane
       Ngoto - waist

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

E.g.: Qoni - Bird
       Qama - Blood
       Polon - Far
       Gbun - Heavy falling sound

NUMERALS

The following numerals are used in counting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ita</th>
<th>- One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fele</td>
<td>- Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawa</td>
<td>- Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naani</td>
<td>- Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loclu</td>
<td>- Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weita</td>
<td>- Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wofla</td>
<td>- Seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayakpa</td>
<td>- Eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taalu</td>
<td>- Nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puu</td>
<td>- Ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puu mahun yila</td>
<td>- Eleven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu gboyongo</td>
<td>- Twenty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu gboyongo mahun puu</td>
<td>- Thirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu fele gboyongo</td>
<td>- Forty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu fele gboyongo mahun puu</td>
<td>- Fifty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu sawa gboyongo</td>
<td>- Sixty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu sawa gboyongo mahun puu</td>
<td>- Seventy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu naani gboyongo</td>
<td>- Eighty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numu naani gboyongo mahun puu</td>
<td>- Ninety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hondo yila</td>
<td>- One hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tausi yila</td>
<td>- One thousand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 mbc - Give me one cent
      Haala Pisko lo - This is the first Peace Corps
      Nya yeso ngi wani - 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 nga yeya - I don't have anyone

Note: Yilakpe (mutated form - yakpe)

Yakpe mia nga yeya - I have only one

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

Haalamui lo pcc bu
Haalablaa ti fonga
Haableisla ti kpcele yeyanga

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

Ti locoolungo ti waal
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 locolu 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Tone</th>
<th>Low Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndé - say it</td>
<td>Bóló - hat/cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hélé - elephant</td>
<td>Mbulû - intestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lá - lie down</td>
<td>Hè - blessing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**                    **Falling Glide**

Tëi - The fowl/chicken     Ngil - I not  
                        (neg. pron)  
Ngúli - The head          Hóndóč  
Selèi - The banana        Búkúl - Book

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

Ndólí - Hook               Ndólí - Dance
Káli - Hoe                 Káli - Snake
Mbówó - Clay               Mbów - 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 mú limá.    We are going together
Máá biá miá 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: Ndiamo, buwaa - Hello, friend
LH: Mm, buwaa, bi sic - Hello

PCV: Gboc bi ngahun? - How are you?
LH: Kaye ii Ngewc ma, o biabccc? - I'm well, and you?

PCV: Nya bsc kaye ii Ngewc ma - I'm well too
LH: Kc 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 gbuangc - I'm well
Co bi waa - Hello (answering a greeting)
Mm, kc ta mia - O.k. we shall see
**Useful Expressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngenda tetei</td>
<td>Early morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngendei</td>
<td>Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folihun</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpoko voe</td>
<td>Evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitiima</td>
<td>Twilight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpindi</td>
<td>Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngewohuin</td>
<td>Dawn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainer’s Cue</th>
<th>Trainee’s Cue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndiamo</td>
<td>Ndiama buwaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngo</td>
<td>Elder brother/sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndake</td>
<td>Male contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyande</td>
<td>Male/female contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyapoi</td>
<td>Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maada</td>
<td>Grandfather/Paramount Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keke</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yie</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinii</td>
<td>Youngman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahei</td>
<td>Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndo Mahei</td>
<td>Paramount Chief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSON TWO

Asking For The Chief

Cultural Explanation

Chiefs in Mende land are held in high esteem. It is therefore necessary for Volunteers to acquaint themselves with chiefs in their respective villages if they are to live and work successfully.

Traditionally, when one visits a chief (especially for the first time) he is expected to take along a gift as a token of establishing relationship. Also in shaking hands with a chief, one is expected to bow a little as a sign of respect.

DIALOGUE

PCV: Konteh buaa
LH: Mm, buaa bi sic

Hello Conteh
Hello

PCV: Ndake nya longo bi mæhei ye pæcla Òc a nge
LH: Maheй ye pæcla lo semæ gblænga kæt ngi humca tet i ya jesiama

I want you to show me the chief’s house
The chief’s house is by the Court Barrie, but I understand he has gone for a walk

PCV: Bi kolo mia i ya na?
LH: Ngii koo. kæleke bi fo ngi ye pæcla bi mæli bia vuil

Do you know where he is gone to?
I don’t know, except you go to his house and ask for yourself

At The Chief’s House

PCV: A wuwa bindo
Occupants: Mm moi bi waa

Hello here
Hello

PCV: Maheй ye pæcla lo?
Occupants: Jo i wa sange gbe ngi ngi loi

Is this the chief’s house?
Yes, he has just come, let me call him
Chief Enters

PCV: Mahei buwaa
Chief: Mm ndiamo bi waa bi sic, mu gcowoo
   Hello chief
   Hello friend, have seat

PCV: Mahei, ngi waa lo
    Ko mua bie mu gooma
Chief: Bi lei?
   Chief, I have come to get
   myself acquainted with
   you
   What's your name?

PCV: Nya laa _____
    Pisko mia a nge
Chief: Bi gbua milo?
   My name is _____
   I am a Peace Corps
   Volunteer
   Where are you coming
   from?

PCV: Ngi gbua Ameika lo
    nya longo ngi hei bi
    lei jihun ko mua weni
    mu yaa kpaa yengei we
Chief: Na nyandegoi. Nga
   pieio nya bondeisia
   ti mago
   That's good. I'll let my
   people know about it

PCV: Mahei fama loo woo
    gbe bi va
Chief: Ee, moi bi sic, Ngewo
    i ndo nya nemahun
   Chief, here is a small
   gift for you
   O.k. thank you youngman,
   let me live to remember
   it through God's will

PCV: Ke ngi ya le pccla
Chief: E-ye mua gbla
   Then I'm going home
   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.

II
The most common definite marker is the suffix i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Singular Form</th>
<th>Definite Singular Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hele - Elephant</td>
<td>Helei - The Elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pcil - House</td>
<td>Pclei - * house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndopo - Child</td>
<td>Ndopoi - * child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanii - Bottle</td>
<td>Sanii - * bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulu - Horn</td>
<td>Bului - * horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolo - Hat</td>
<td>Boloi - * hat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a few exceptions to this pattern.

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

   E.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Singular</th>
<th>Definite Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mba - Rice</td>
<td>Mbei - The rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haa - Death</td>
<td>Haei - The death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Singular</th>
<th>Definite Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mcm - Mirror</td>
<td>Mcm - The mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndola - Baby</td>
<td>Ndola - The baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kana - Box</td>
<td>Kana - The box</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite Singular</th>
<th>Indefinite Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maha - Chief</td>
<td>Mahangaa - Chiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndili - Housefly</td>
<td>Ndilingaa - Houseflies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hele - Elephant</td>
<td>Helengaa - Elephants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndopo - Child</td>
<td>Ndopongaa - Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definite Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahangeisia - The chiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndiligeisia - The houseflies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helengeisia - The elephants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndopoisisa - The children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Salan 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 na fa 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 mehc 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)

Ngengemo - The worker (Definite singular)
Mcmoi - The eater (Definite singular)
Piemoi - The doer (Definite singular)

Ngengeblaap - Workers (Indefinite plural)
Mcbllaap - Eaters (Indefinite plural)
Pibiaa - Doers (Indefinite plural)

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

Ngengemo waa mehc yiimo gama The worker has come to the cook.
Pcc loblaa lo mia The house builders are there
Ti humableisia houna They have caught the thieves
PRONOUNS

Pronouns in Mendé 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 | Negative Forms
--- | ---
Nya - 1st per sing - I | Ngi + ii = ngi - I not
Bia - 2nd per sing - You | Bi + ii = bi - You not
Ta - 3rd per sing - He/she/it | I + ii = ii - He/she/it not
Mua - 1st per plu - We | Mu + ii = mui - We not
Wua - 2nd per plu - You | Wu + ii = wui - You not
Tia - 3rd per plu - They | Ti + 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. Biil lima Bo - You are not going to Bo
3. Ti lima Bo - He is not going to Bo
4. Mui lima Bo - We are not going to Bo
5. Wui 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 kpaa yengei lo we - I do farm work
2. Nga mbei mce - I eat rice
3. Ba tisa yengei lo we - You do a teaching work
4. A ndowe lo bo - He digs a hole
5. Ma dodei mce - We eat pig
6. Wa kpetei laa - You make swamp
7. Ta hale yengei lo we - They do health work

Negative Forms - Occur with verb stems

1. Nge kpaa yenge we - I don’t do farm work
2. Nge mba mce - I don’t eat rice
3. Betisa yenge we - You don’t do teaching work
4. E ndowa bo - He does not dig a hole
5. Mue ndooce mce - 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 mce lo sina - I shall eat rice tomorrow
2. Nga waloo - I shall come
3. Ta kpiti hawalo wei - The will brush the grass sometime during the day

Negative Expression

1. Nge mba mce sina - I will not eat rice tomorrow
2. Nge wa - I shall not come
3. Te kpiti haws 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 la 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 OURSELVES

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
LH: Mm bi sic, kahuin yena?

PCV: Nya ngahun gbuangó
LH: Bi lei?

PCV: Nya laa__ Pisko mia a nge
LH: Bi gbuá mi lo?

PCV: Ngí gbua Ameika lo
LH: Bi vui ya lole?

PCV: Nya vui ya fo numugbo-
LH: Ba gbe yenge lo we?

PCV: Nga hale yenge lo we
LH: Mi gbe mia bi wei ndoce jihun?

PCV: Nge wei ngawuinahúp
LH: Bi sic, ke malo

PCV: E-ye

Afternoon friend
Hi, how are you?
I’m quite well
What is your name?
My name is___ I am a Peace Corps Volunteer
Where do you come from?
I come from America
How old are you?
I am twenty four years old
What work do you do?
I am a health worker
When did you come to this country?
I came last month
Thanks, see you then
O.k.

Alternate Forms

Bi biyei? What is your name?
Bi ye gbuá? Where are you coming from?
Gbe yenge mia ba pie Where do you come from?
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
Ngis 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 a nge - I am in the Parks/ I am a
                              Parks worker
Tisa mia a ngie             - He is a teacher

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

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

Substitution Drill

A.   Kabala
     Bo
     Kenema
     Salon                - Freetown/Sierra Leone
     Makeni
     Kono
     Teihun                - Town
     Sukuihung             - School
     Kpaahun               - Form
     Haiwebu               - Hospital
     Ndoweihun             - Market day

B.   Kpaa
     Tisa
     Dokta
     Nyca make
     Huan mahun gbe
     Nja lowa bo
     Latii bo

Ngi gbia Ameika lo
Ngi lima teihun lo

Nga hale yengei lo we
LESSON FOUR

'Asking About Ones' Family

Cultural Explanation

The people do not only want to know about you, but also your family. In trying to create a genuine and cordial relationship they probe into ones' background. Because the Mendes care about visitors they like to know about them. In the family, husbands are expected to be older than their wives.

DIALOGUE

PCV and an Oldman

LH: Stiy~ buwaae, ndake
Stiv: Mm kckc Omo gbe va kahuin?

LH: Kaye ii Meahein ma. O bia bce?
Stiv: Nya loc dde de ma

LH: Nda ke nga ndiamo lo a bie hoe
Stiv: Nya, nga kekc mia a bie

LH: Na manengo wale. Nya lo mia a bie hoe O bi kekc taa bi nje?
Stiv: Nya kekc taa nga nje lo Amcika

LH: Ti wovango waa?
Stiv: Oo, kec nga nje wovei Nya kekc ma foo sawa

LH: Encn! mua mbi nyahan e wova ngi hini ma
Stiv: Bc qbcen. yama le na ooma

LH: Ngc, ndoc jihun nyahan wova a lo ngi hini ma
Stiv: Encn!
LH: Bi ndegaa ti lola?
Stiv: Nya ndegaa ti naani hingaa ti fele kc nya-hangaa ti fele
LH: Bi ndegaa kpec ta li lo suku?
Stiv: Nva nde nyahangaa sia lo lima suku. Nva nde hingaa tia ti kpooya a suku, tia na yenge ma
LH: Ke bi sie hoe
Stiv: E-ye kc malo

How many brothers and sisters have you?
I have four, two brothers and two sisters
Do all of them go to school?
My sisters are still attending school. My brothers have finished school, they are now working
Thank you then
O.k. see you

Useful Expressions

Bi nde lo
Bi ndii lo
Bi nde nyahan lolo
Bi nde nyahanloi lo
Bi nde hindo lo
Bi nde hindo i lo
Bi keke
Bi nje
Bi kenyia

This is a brother to you
This is your brother
This is a sister to you
This is your sister
This is a brother to you
This is your brother
Your father
Your mother
Your uncle

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Nya - My
Bi - Your
Ngii - 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

Ngii keke ya teihun - His father has gone to town
Ngii keke ii li ni teahun- - His father did not go to town

Ti leinun ya sewesewe - Their town is clean
Ti leihun ii sewesewe - Their town is not clean

Mu gbaa lo - This is our farm
Mu gbaa ya ji - This is not our farm

20
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 goweif?
Wu nda kogo ii na - Where is your own shoe?
- 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 honga - They have sewn their own trousers

Interrogative Pronouns

These are:

Ye Who
Gbco What
Gbcoo What
Ye mia bi loni Who sent you
Ye mia a ngie? Who is he?
Gbco bi wumba? What is on your head?
Ye mia pecia? Who is at home?
Gbco mia ba piebi? What do you do here?
Relexive 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 longa a nya yekpe  -  I love myself
Tì tìa yekpe ñonanga  -  They have wounded themselves
LESSON FIVE
IDENTIFYING OBJECTS IN THE MARKET

DIALOGUE

PCV: Ansu nya longo ngi fee - Ansu I want to go
    ngö

LH: Mu li makitihun - Let's go to the market

Makitihun - In the Market

PCV: Gbe lo a ji? - What is this?

LH: Pujei mia - This is pepper

PCV: Be gben? Ngï humeï - What did you say? I
didn't hear you

LH: Nde le boma yelen - Say it again slowly

PCV: Pu-jei. Enen. Gbe mia a ye na? - Pep-per. Ah. What is
    that one?

LH: Sakii mia - That is cassava leaves

Substitution Drill

Pujei - Pepper eg. Pujei lo - This is pepper
Lumbee/Salui - Orange
Jowoi - Potato
Yabasi/Sibaa - Onions
Mbei - Rice
Nguloi - Oil
Towoi - Beans
Honduc - green beans
Nikii - Groundnut
Glo gboi - Palm oil
Të yawul - Egg
Tei - Fowl
Huïn - Meat
Nyi - Fish
Nye wundi - Raw fish
Nye bi - Dried fish
**Demonstrative Pronouns**

These are:

Ji  This        Jisia  These
Na  That        Nasia  Those

Pujei mia a ji  This is pepper
Ji mc           Eat this
Na vembc        Give me that one
Na yekpei ji ma  That is better than this
Jisia ti nyandei nasia ma 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 FCVs because some traders take chances by inflating prices when selling to strangers.

DIALOGUE

PCV: Vie bia naa
MW: Mm, nya lui bia naa
Gboo nga pie bie?

PCV: Tec ngel jisia ti jonjoi?
MW: Pon numufele gboyongco yila va

PCV: Ti baa gba ngol yo
Be mahun yei klo nya we?

MW: Gbenjongo mia bi yeya?

PCV: Pon numugboyongco mahun
nuu mia nya yeya.
MW: Pon lolu glua na ma

PCV: Kon ci le ngi na ve.
Gbe-o-gbe li ya nya yeya
MW: Kc wa la

PCV: Tagbe, baika hoe
Nya ndiamo mia a bie na
MW: E-ye malo

Afternoon, mum
Yea, afternoon my child
What can I do for you?
What is the cost of these fowls?
Le40.00 each

They are expensive though
Won't you reduce this price for me?
How much do you have?
I have Le30.00
Add Le10.00 to that
Please let me pay that.
I have nothing left with me
Bring it then
Here it is, thank you.
You are now my friend
O.k. see you

Alternate Forms

Tei gbe jongo?
How much is the fowl?

Pon lolu gbeci na ma.
Add Le10.00 to that

Be tenga gbuu ma nya we?
Won't you reduce the price for me?
Useful Expressions

Nya longɔ a sakii — I want cassava leaf

Nya longɔ ngi nikii yeya — I want to buy groundnuts

Ngì 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 mc min mia ha n a ma — I want to eat fufu today

Nya longɔ ha ngi tangei mc — I want to eat cassava root today

Bondɔ hapkei mia ha nga mc — 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
LH: Mm, nya lui bi sic
PCV: Maada nya n damui lo
     ngi laa Al
LH: Al buaa, nya gohun nengo
     bi lo va
Al: Nya bec nya gohun nengo
     bi lo va
LH: Ba yenge milo?
Al: Nga yenge Otamba lo
LH: Mu ngewoo, hewui gbe
Al: Bi sic

Good afternoon, oldman/grandpa
Hi, good day my son
Grandpa, this is my friend: he is called Al
Good day Al, I'm glad to see you
I am also happy to see you
Where do you work?
I work at Outamba
Please have seat
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 selei 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 wimcnga 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 pindcnga 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.

Lc  go up
Wa  Come
Li  Go
La  Lie down

B. Verbs have 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 wecní  He is bowing down (state)
Taa wecema  "  "  "  "  (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

Ngii ycc na I was there
Ngii ycc na I was not there

Future

The pronoun changes and the future marker lo is used.

Nga ycc lo I will be
A ycc lo He/she will be
Ba ycc lo You will be
Mua ycc lo We will be
Ta ycc lo They will be
Nga ycc lo na I will be there
Ngei ycc na I will not be there
**RE Duplication 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Forms</th>
<th>Reduplicated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tewe</td>
<td>Tewetewe (teetee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbla</td>
<td>Mblambla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pote</td>
<td>Potepote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faya</td>
<td>Fayafaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fili</td>
<td>Fillipili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some adjectives are reduplicated as intensifiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Forms</th>
<th>Reduplicated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nyande</td>
<td>Nyandenyande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohon</td>
<td>Mohonchon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyamu</td>
<td>Nyamunyamu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numerals can also be reduplicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Forms</th>
<th>Reduplicated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngila</td>
<td>Ngilangila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawa</td>
<td>Sawaiwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puu</td>
<td>Puu puu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pele</td>
<td>Pelefele</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbs too can be reduplicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Forms</th>
<th>Reduplicated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flo</td>
<td>Floflo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelen</td>
<td>Yelenyelen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
PCV: Mm buwaa bi sic
LH: Nga to haka hui bi yeya. Bi ye lima a gendei ji?
PCV: Ngí lima Moyamba lo
Mindo mia nga motoi mawulo na?
LH: Lo leke jonsoe la, motoi ya le ma bi to, bi moli mia i'lima na
PCV: Deva buaa, bi lima milo?
Driver: Bia bi lima mi lo?
PCV: Ngí lima Moyamba lo
Driver: Nya be ngi lima na lo
PCV: Gbc jogo mi li va?
Driver: Pon nunaani gbogo
Afternoon dear
Afternoon
I see you with a luggage, where are going to this morning?
I’m going to Moyamba
Where can I get a vehicle?
Just stand at the junction, when any vehicle comes by, stop in and enquire where it is going to
Hello driver, where are you going to?
Where are you going to?
I’m going to Moyamba
I’m also going there
What is the fare to go there?
Hundred and sixty leones
PCV: Kpoo! kpotogoi yo
Konele ngi pon nusawa
gbo gomahun loclu ve
Driver: Ndake na glo gô, pon
loclu la ma
PCV: Kulu goi
Driver: Hakaa bi yeya?
PCV: Duvu bagi wuî ji mia
lee nyo ye ya. Nga too
lo pen ngoma
Driver: Ke lo yo

In the Vehicle

PCV: Ndiamo bi sì, konele
malukpe nga we hoe
(Passenger shifts)
Baika
Bia be bi ma Moyamba
lo?
Pass: So
PCV: Bia be womia a mbalei
ji?
Pass: So, ngi ma saa lo gbiam-
ma

Alternate Forms

Bi ma mi lo?
Ba li mi?
Nga motoi majo milo?
Nga motoi wumbu milo
Ngi bi ngo a pon...

Where are you going to?
Where can I get a vehicle?
Let me pay...leones
Useful Expressions

Nga ye pie ngi motoi majo? How can I get a vehicle?
Mindo ma moto ló? Where is this vehicle from/going to?
Motoi ji ye lima? Where is this vehicle going to?
Ye moto ló? Whose vehicle is this?
Bia bi woló a motoi ji? Are you the owner of this vehicle?
Li a nge 0 Please take me along
Dcva 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 nyc lowei boó 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.

Ng i 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.

Ng i lilo I went

Piskoisia ti pcc The Peace Corps built
lilo 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 i and w are generally elided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unelided Word</th>
<th>Elided Sound</th>
<th>Elided Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tewe - Cut</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Tee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndowu - Hide</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Ndou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pele - Road</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Pee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngolo - Break</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Ngoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Consonants are frequently elided from the verbal suffixes:

-\( l o \) and -\( nga \)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngii lilo} & \quad \text{I went} \\
\text{I ndeilo} & \quad \text{He said it} \\
\text{Mu mca} & \quad \text{We have eaten it} \\
\text{Piskoesia} & \quad \text{The Peace Corps} \\
\text{ti waa} & \quad \text{have come} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\( \text{Mu mcelo/menga} \)

\( \text{Piskoesia ti wanga} \)

\( (\text{for ngi lilo}) \)

\( (\text{for ndeilo}) \)

c) In the verbal suffixes, -\text{mal}o and -\text{galo} they may be elided and the \( o \) assimilated to the preceding vowel.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngii lima} & \quad \text{I am going} \\
\text{Ti piema} & \quad \text{They are doing it} \\
\text{I wonga} & \quad \text{It has broken} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\( (\text{for ngi limalo}) \)

\( (\text{for ti piemalo}) \)

\( (\text{for i wongalo}) \)

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nya wama} & \quad \text{I am coming} \\
\text{Taa mce} & \quad \text{He is eating it} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\( (\text{for nya lo wama}) \)

\( (\text{for ta lo mce}) \)

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Klo} & \quad \text{in front} \\
\text{Mbla} & \quad \text{male in-law} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\( (\text{for kulc}) \)

\( (\text{for mbila}) \)

**CONSONANT MUTATION**

This is a feature of Mande languages. It is a system wherein the initial consonants in many words are mutated by simple lenision. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unmutated</th>
<th>Mutated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K Kali</td>
<td>G Gali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Towei</td>
<td>L Lowei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nd Ndoli</td>
<td>L Loli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Sani</td>
<td>J Jani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Fololo</td>
<td>V Volo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kp Kpaki</td>
<td>Gb Gbaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nj Nja</td>
<td>Y Ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mb MBA</td>
<td>B Ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Pele</td>
<td>W Wele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng Ngate</td>
<td>Y Yate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng Ngoli</td>
<td>W Woli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokoi</th>
<th>The hand</th>
<th>Nya lokoi lo gbalAMA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>My hand is wounded/aching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domei</td>
<td>The shirt</td>
<td>Bi lomei nchongo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Your shirt is dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelei</td>
<td>The house</td>
<td>NgI wclei nyandengo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>His house is beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpukoi</td>
<td>The bed</td>
<td>Mu gbukoisia ti wovaI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Our beds are old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 |
| NDoweī   | Hole             |                          |
| Ngō      | Child            | = Mende lo - Mende child |
| Mende    | Mende            |                          |
| Poō      | Earth/mud        | = Poō vei - Earthen pot  |
| Fei      | Pot              |                          |
| Tokpo    | Palm tree        | = Tokpo yasei - Palm branch |
| Jaseī    | Thatch           |                          |

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

| Ngī kpandilo | I heated it           |
| Ngī jei gbandilo | I heated the water |
| Bi nguanilo   | You washed (it)      |
| Bi kluẹ/ wuanilo | You washed the clothes |
| Mu ndewenilo  | We beat (it)         |
| Mu ndoī 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 | Stand near (it) |
| Lo kplanga     | Stand near the house |
| Lo pći gblanga |                             |
| Poma - Behind  | Sit behind (it)      |
| Hi poma        | Sit behind him/her   |
| Hi ngi woma    |                             |
| Kakama - By the side | Place (it) by the side |
| Nda kakama     | Place it by the side of the bed |
| Nda kpukue gakama |

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

| Teli - Fcil ieli | Black house |
| Kutu - Numu gutu | Short person |
LESSON NINE

HEALTH

HOW TO COMPLAIN ILLNESS

LH: Ndake, gbei bi ya ha koyo?
PCV: Nya gahun mia li gbue

Friend, why are you so dull today?
I am not feeling well

LH: Gboc bi ma?
PCV: Nya gahuin gbi mia a gbaa kpaa. Nya wui a gbale koc nga gblagei jia gbi.
Kolei be a wu nga ma.

What is wrong with you?
I have pains all over my body. My head aches as well as my joints. I also feel feverish.

LH: Kenga gboloi mia bchin.
Gbena hoe. Be li' ba dokta lo haiwεbu?

Perhaps it is malaria.
Have my sympathy. Why not go and see the doctor in the hospital?
I will go to the hospital tomorrow

PCV: Nga li lo sina weidihun

LH: Ngewο i bi hale
PCV: Amin. Malo sina

May the Lord cure you
Amen. See you tomorrow

Alternate Forms

Nya hingbejgo I am sick/I am not feeling well
Ngewο i bi bеo 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 gonorhea
Bumblei mia ngi goweima I have elephantiasis

Nya yami 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness/Disease</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gbeloe</td>
<td>Malaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpokpoe</td>
<td>Cripple/lame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyonyo</td>
<td>Measles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohen bei</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetch</td>
<td>Small pox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandai/Bumbulei</td>
<td>Elephantiasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luaa</td>
<td>Hernia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundii</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vio lohen</td>
<td>Whooping cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanyii</td>
<td>Gonorrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nohuin</td>
<td>Scabies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puumui</td>
<td>Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malete</td>
<td>Leprosy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpalcmei</td>
<td>Sore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geli</td>
<td>Ulcer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobui</td>
<td>Small pox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemi</td>
<td>Ringworm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suguibu</td>
<td>Body wide scabbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndivui</td>
<td>Small boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fehani</td>
<td>Tumour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbeli</td>
<td>Blue boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaalei</td>
<td>Abscess muscular contraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpoli</td>
<td>A worm of any kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbale (v)</td>
<td>To pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali (v)</td>
<td>To vomit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kale hingbe</td>
<td>Rheumatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njii hingbe</td>
<td>Sleeping sickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popui</td>
<td>Skin diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leaving white patches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kewei</td>
<td>Yaws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSON 10

SEASONS/CLIMATE

WEATHER EXAMINATION

In Sierra Leone, we have two basic seasons, the dry season and the rainy season. During the dry season, we experience harmattan from November to December.

DIALOGUE

LH: Ngo biana
PCV: Mm, ndake bi sic

LH: Gbc voo lo a ha?
PCV: Ha tene, ta bi tua

LH: Ee, ngevuilun fui a gbua wa, taa nga e wa lee
PCV: Ngawu lolc va mia ngevuilun a loo?

LH: A loo ngawu weita valo. A loto lugbu yawuihun lo i gbcoyo Buwuihun
PCV: Mm, kc na woma mia ham wee a loto?

LH: Ce, hamihun ta jei a waa wati gbi. Tenga pen numu e ngu a jcsia a jifa jei a bi leli lo

Alternate Forms

Foe a gbua waa nge vuilun
Ngau weita va mia a lo

The sun shines brightly during the dry season
It lasts for six months
### Substitution Drill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainers Cue</th>
<th>Trainers Cue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenc</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taata</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaba</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikamisa</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aijuma</td>
<td>Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibiti</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahadi</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Useful Expressions

- **Ngawui gbindingɔ**
- **Migbe mia bi lima teihun?**
- **Sibitima mia nga li teihun**
- **Fui gbadi go waa ha**
- **Kolei lo wama wa ha**
- **Bodu lọ waa wama**
- **Njei gbii ngɔ**

The moon is dark
When are you going to town?
I'll go to town on Saturday
The sun is too hot today
The weather is too cold today
I'm feeling too hot today
It's cloudy - it may rain

### Vocabulary

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawa</td>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>Hawa locolu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Ku fele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loo</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Loo sawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polo</td>
<td>Day/sun</td>
<td>Foo gbadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngau</td>
<td>Month/moon</td>
<td>Ngau puu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At day break
The moon is dark
Morning sun
At sunrise/when the sun is up
At sunrise
noon
Afternoon/evening
Midnight

### ADVERBS

These normally occur in postverbal and initial positions.

**A)**
- Jia floflo
- Baa jia yelen
- Wa siahuna

Walk quickly
Don't walk slowly
Come now

**B)**
- Na mia ngi lii na
- Bendo mia ba pie ma
- Ha lo i waa

It is there I went
It is here you have to do it
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
- **Lômbolo/gomondo** - Sluggishly
- **Lélé** - Slowly
- **Mbe** - Here
- **Sina** - Tomorrow
- **Sange** - Soon
- **Baaba** - Foolishly

**IDEOPHONES**

These are adverbs mostly of degree and manner whose sound suggest their meaning (onomatopoeia). 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 kpe** - He cut the rope...
- **Fendango kpa** - It is completely full
- **Ngi menga nyao** - I have eaten everything
- **Guii guleilo gbun** - 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:**

- **Gbeleñ** - Sound like that of a bell
- **Polon** - Far, very far
Interrogative Adverbs

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

Mindo mia bi lima na? Where are you going to?
Migbe mia bi wani ndoc When did you come to this
jihun? country?
Lolc 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 gbavango 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 gbitii loe Brush the bushy road
Tamba lo lumbe lulei mema 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 -ngó.

Nyandengó He/she/it is beautiful
Ninango It is new
Govango It is old
Telingo It is black
Mahei mamuningó The chief is proud/arrogant
Nyapoi nyandengó The lady is beautiful
Ndomei leingo The shirt is wet

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

Kena gutungói hangá The short man has died
Baa ngengé mi hawangói na go Don't give that lazy worker
Nika lilengoisia gbé 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 kpé ci gbua Let all ugly people go out
Hawableisia ti ndéi mia That belongs to the lazy
                          people
Negative Forms

Adjectives take the suffix -ni to form the negative.

Bi nyahin if nyandeni  Your wife is not beautiful
Ndomei na ii nohoni  The shirt is not dirty
Ngii hawani  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  I did it (nya emphasised)
Yie mia wanga  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 cannot express 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?  Is it mother that has come?
Mm, ta le  Yes, it is she
Yoo pec la?  Who is at the door
Nya le  I

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

Nyandego (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) Keko ii lini suku         Father didn't go to school
    Nyapoi ii nyamuni       The lady is not ugly
    Ngii mbeli mcni         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 lc           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 mhen         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 kpel 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 kpeteihun, 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 ychun wati gbi

Farmer: Mindoo ba nyenga majo na puva ye dowei hun?
PCV: Nyc leengaalo ndoc jihun kpoto. Nyc makeblaa ye pekeisia ta ti majia gboma

Farmer: Gboc ba fe tec mec va?
PCV: Ba ti goc a mba gei, ngiinga, jowola, nika kpoi besi kpoi, kce je kpoi bec

Farmer: Ta gau lolc lo wumbu pen numu a ya ti mec?
PCV: Ta gau naani lo wumbu

Farmer: Bia bi ngiigo la kc liloma hinda lo?
PCV: Hinda yekpe lo numu kpeleva

Farmer: Ke nya be ngi tatoma a nyegaa make la
PCV: Nga gohun a ncc gbova bi ma

Farmer: How is fish farming done?
PCV: You should dig a pond in swamp and clear it completely

Farmer: How large should the pond be?
PCV: It should be about the size of this palour. It should also contain water always

Farmer: Where do you get the fish from to put in the pond?
PCV: There are fingerlings throughout this country. Other fish farmers also sell them

Farmer: What do you give them to eat?
PCV: Feed them with rice bran, termites, cow dung, pig dung, potato leaves and even excreta of sheep

Farmer: How many months do they take before one eats them?
PCV: They take four months

Farmer: Do you think this is a reliable venture?
PCV: This is a good thing for everyone

Farmer: Then I am also going to start fish farming
PCV: I will be very happy to help you
Useful Expressions

Nyc make lei manengo
Fish farming is good

Nyangego nyi m'va watigbi
It's good to eat fish always

Bi logo bi gaa a nyc yengei?
Do you want to learn fish work?

Nga gbolo bi ma ye ngegei gaa va.
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
Teacher: Kini buwae bi sic
        gbo jia a bie?

Parent: Ngi wa nye loi lo
        hindu hungbe ma
Teacher: A gbe

Parent: Sia ngi yegelokoi na
        suku ihun
Teacher: Bi loi biyei?

Parent: Ngi laa Buakei Sama
Teacher: Oo! ngi ngi goolo,
        I nya klasihunlo
        Ngi nemahun le ngo
        Ke a sci waa gliu
        klasihun.
        Nya pen ngo gii
        hungbe va a bie koo
        bi ngi lahin

Parent: Tisa bi sic ka na le
        ma na, nya logoi bi
        kpora ye nga ma ye
        hindu ngihun, gbeya
        ndoi ta numu yila
        woo ii le. Ya yama
        lawo ngi ma nahin a
        we i luwa

Good morning teacher
Good morning sir, how are you
what is your mission?

I've come to enquire about my
child
What for

About his progress and
behaviour in school
What is your child's name?

His name is Bockarie Sama
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

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 kuluogi ye ngaa  O.k. sir
        Ngaa mua bie goyia  I hope it is a compromise
        le? Nga yaa na a  between us. I will now
        ngi yaabc  keep watching him

Parent:  Kc tamia tisa  O.k. see you teacher
        Ba ya a foo nyama  Please be visiting me
        Teacher: E-ye kc maol  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  Did you ask them to bring
navo?  money?
Ngii wa nya loi hunvelma  I have come to obtain permission
for my child
Bi loi ji yukpa go wa  Your child is very troublesome
Bi loi ii baa goc 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  See that he always comes to
sukuihun  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 tebii ma  Put the book on the table
Buakei lo pcc woma  Bockarie is behind the house
Nda nya gulo  Put it infront of me
Too ngi yakama  Place it by his side
Examples of some more postpositions.

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

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
   Sao gbuaa kpaahun
   Mu li kpaahun

   They are in the farm
   Sao has come from the farm
   Let us go to the farm

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

B) Nya nyahel lo pec bu
   Baa li la pec bu
   Ngai gbe pec bu
   Gonc lo tibii bu

   My wife is in the house
   Don't take it into the house
   Drive him from the house
   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 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?
LH: Ngalu puumahun fele mia foihun
PCV: Ba gulo bi ti laagbawa Mende yeihun?
LH: Jo
PCV: Kc ti laa ge a ngc Wolo panda hoe
LH: Nga wolo ma, kc ba nde lo malelgc
PCV: Bi sic ka

Joe, how many months are there in a year?
There are twelve months in a year
Can you name them in Mende?
Yes
Then please show them to me
Listen carefully
I'm listening, but please say it slowly
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
Thank you very much

DAYS OF THE WEEK

PCV: Fo lolc mia hoki yilahun?
LH: Fo wofil a mia hoki yilahun
PCV: Bi sic ka

How many days are there in a week?
There are seven days in a week
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
LESSON FOURTEEN

SWAMP RICE FARMING

DIALOGUE A

PCV: Kini omo buaa-e
LH: Mm, ndiamo bi sie
PCV: I yena, migbe mia bi kpete yegei latoma?
LH: Wati hintiama. Bia naalee ngi bi mawulo ma ko bi nya lo pema
PCV: Ke ba lilo naa bi kpetei lue, bi gaa-yia, ki bi pujaa.
Pen ba ya tato ba mbei saanilo, nahi-neve aa ye bi kpooy a bi gbeetei wuja la mbei gugo a yclanaa hin va
LH: Ba nya ngoo a mba huun wulo
PCV: Gbei mba huun gbii bi yeeya?
LH: So
PCV: Ke wa sina nga bi gco a mba huin
LH: E-ye, ke nya sina wama

DIALOGUE B

PCV: Kini omo biana
LH: Sembecjomui bi ye luvei?
PCV: Nya loco dedema. Bi ye gclia a kpete yegei?
LH: Mbei vaigoi naa, sina yekei mia nga taato a hinla. Kpetei kpcc wuja goi naa
PCV: Afternoon Mr Momoh
LH: Scmbecjomui bi ye luvei?
PCV: Nya loco dedema. Bi ye gclia a kpete yegei?
LH: Mbei vaigoi naa, sina yekei mia nga taato a hinla. Kpetei kpcc wuja goi naa
PCV: I'm managing. How far have you gone with the swamp work?
LH: Mbei vaigoi naa, sina yekei mia nga taato a hinla. Kpetei kpcc wuja goi naa
PCV: The rice has already germinated. I'll start transplanting the day after tomorrow. The swamp is already dug

53
PCV: Bi nja we leilo plo-tisia ti luahun? Did you make drainages in-between the plots?
LH: Joo, sia le ge bi hun-gei la a nge Yes, just as you instructed me

PCV: Ke nya sina wama ngi kpeteihun lo. Bi ya mbebi hinma, ba ti lootoo waa gblagbiaga Then I'll be coming tomorrow to
LH: Joo bia vui lo sina see the swamp. When transplanting the rice, do not wa ma bi na lo? cluster them together

PCV: Joo Yes
LH: Ke ba nya malelo Then you will meet me
Mua lo We shall see

Glossary of Tools/Useful Expressions on Farming

Bembe: Fishing net
Bumbui: Fishing Trap
Due: Brush
Due kpe: Brushing time
Felei: Winnowing time
Gaaga kpe: Time for clearing after burning
Hambui: An object made of wire hung over fire for drying fish or meat
Kali: Hoe
Kondei: Mortar
Koni: Axe
Koboi: Mat (made out of bamboo)
Kpakai: Three legged wooden chair typical of Mendes - used especially on farms
Kpasei: Circular object used for climbing palm trees
Kpangbei: Broom
Kpawei: Forked stick
Kpuloi: Gourd/keg
Kpoe: Farm house
Lavulei: Sling used for scaring birds
Mbahui: Seed rice
Mbouei: Knife
Mbale bowei: Sickle/knife used for cutting rice
Ndoe bowei: Brushing knife
Mbogbei: Cutlass
Po bogbei: Cutlass for cutting down trees
Ndogboi: Bush
Ndoli: Hook
Ngombui: Fire
Piyei: Container for putting fish while fishing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Po kpee</td>
<td>Time for cutting down large trees/felling time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpea wo wati</td>
<td>Burning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbawa kpee</td>
<td>Ploughing time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gugbia kpee</td>
<td>Weeding time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbale kpee</td>
<td>Harvest season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motu kpee</td>
<td>Period of waiting for first rain before ploughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mba wufoi</td>
<td>Newly ploughed land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mba vai</td>
<td>Germinated rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobai</td>
<td>Unploughed land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glangle</td>
<td>Gathering and clearing of unburnt shrubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternate Forms

Nyahagaa ti lolc bi yeya?  How many wives have you
Nya nyahin yakpe  I have only one wife

Useful Expressions

Nya nyahangaa ti lcolu  I have five wives
Nya nyahin baa vonu  My wife died last year
Nya nyahin li ya ndo lei  My wife hasn’t a child yet
Nya legaa ti nge lo  This is my children’s
mother
Nyaha ii nya yeya lo  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 kondel.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCV: Kini Bloma biana</th>
<th>Goodday Mr Brima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH: Mm, ndiamo bi sic wa mu mehen mce</td>
<td>Yea, goodday friend Come and let's eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCV: Enen, ndake na gbategoi na</td>
<td>0.k. I'm alright now/I'm fed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH: Ndake, wa be ho bi kulo me</td>
<td>Man, come and have a bit at least</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCV: Tonya mia, ke ndake genda mehen mia ha ngi mia, ye kove mia nya ma. Kone le i ye a wati yeka</td>
<td>That's true, but man, I have eaten some morning food today and I'm still fed. Please let it be another time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH: Mm, ngi humeinga ye</td>
<td>0.k. I've heard you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCV: Ke gbe ngi fo teihu nya wama</td>
<td>Let me go to town, I'll be back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH: E-ye, malo</td>
<td>0.k. see you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alternate Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nya govengoi</th>
<th>I'm alright/I'm fed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nya foma teihu ngi wa</td>
<td>I'm going to town and back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Useful Expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokopepe</th>
<th>Taking food with your hands at a faster rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kavei</td>
<td>Taking too much food at one go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi llingo wa</td>
<td>You are gluttonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi lamingo wa</td>
<td>You are gluttonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi hataigo</td>
<td>You are gluttonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi mehenhindago</td>
<td>You are gluttonous (never satisfied with food)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi nchengo wa</td>
<td>You like to stand by for people's food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi vofulango</td>
<td>You are voracious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conjunctions

These act as "joining words"

Examples

Taa/kc - and
Sheik taa Fled lo Mende bukui nyii ma.
Sheik and Fred are writing the Mende book.

Bia kc 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.

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

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

Ina - if
Mua mu nda bei mec 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 nyønaaye
Oh! I have wounded myself

Aa ya! - also exclamation of surprise or regret

Hoe! - Emphasis - interrogative particle

Please/shall we
LESSON 16
BACK FROM A TRIP

Cultural Explanation

It is usually expected that one brings gifts or presents back home for friends and relatives especially when one returns from a journey. However, there is always a way of evading this, if it should create any embarrassment.

DIALOGUE

LH: Bo buaa
PCV: Mm, nyande bi sic

Hello friend
Hello madam

LH: Bi ye gbua ma?
PCV: Ngi gbua Salon lo

Where are you coming from?
I'm coming from Freetown

LH: GBeva na?
PCV: Ngi ye nyamu lui na

How are things there?
Not bad

LH: C nya yoyoi?
PCV: Bia yeso nya glogbatei ve lo

What did you bring for me?
Give me first what you kept for me

LH: Gbe va?
PCV: Kulo gbate lo a joyo gbua

Why?
What is kept for someone encourages him to offer gifts

LH: Ke gbe ngi ya a kokooi
PCV: Nya be nga ya a joyoi gokooi

Then let me be finding it
I will also be looking out for your gift

LH: E-ye

O.k.

Alternate Forms

Ye nyamu ii na
Gbo bi nya yoyoi la?
Gbe ngi ya ndolo

Not bad
What did you bring for me
Let me be finding it
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 mgi wani I came on the day after yesterday
Ngì 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 wiliwa
   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 fcefei gbuawe ngo a tce wei lekpce.
   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 woe 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 bcc 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 yami
   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, kcc ngi bloi lo kaqahun.
    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. Ngomoy lo a ngomoy go.
    A river gives a giver.
    One good turn deserves another.
14. Bcki 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. Pimei 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 be le gbua numu ma.

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


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


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

22. Mia ta nkei yili na, naa mia a mali na.

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

23. Ti ya ndopoma kpo lo touma, 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


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


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. Sele sele 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 Mendes 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 kode

Story Teller:

Wati yilama mchome gomengaa ti yee fula naanihun. Ye fula naanisia kpecle ti ngowi will lo kasiwulo ngama ko i be ye konijisia ma.


Ji leke seifani hintini ke i biama fula naani-jisia kpecle ti totonga a mchen mela lenga. Ji wie nggo ke ngi lenga ti totonga a ngeyei laalala. Ti ngeyei jisia laalele 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 kulochin ke i haa.
Jinaa ngi lengeisia ni ngi laalanga han ti ngi loii, ke ti yamanga hungbe va ina gbo ti kkee 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 foioi na ma wo kasiwulo lia genyen foioi jibc kasiwulo gbi le ngitie ya kulohin.

Listeners: Gbo ji ye mbui le?
Story Teller: Mehen hinda ma ii nemi

Translation – Spider and the Four Villages

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

When spider heard the 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 breathe. 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 Mesii). Hinga gboto, kondaa 0 kpakogaa 0 ti yc Jomu ti loni lo a ye ndopoi ji hei va. Ke ji ti ngi wani sandeihun, ti ngi gbuua, ii lumani a sinhindo gbi joc ye teijihun. Ji ti ngi molini, i nde lo ye ti ya ngi lima hindo loni.

Jomu i yen i ta a lo wo mia ndowe j a hei na yumagbi. Juma yila ma, mesi i ye jopowahunlo (makitihan) makiti majiamei ke i ndakpou nyandengo wa longa. Ndakpe ji longo 0 ke i gbengbanga wa ngi va. Na kpo i hiyei lo mia i ye hei na ke i totonga a tola ndakpejima. I loilo toma ngima han ndakpe i kpo 0 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 leq, be bi longo a nge? Konele vama. Mesii i woloni dahijima, ke i tonga huen tamui jima.

I toi lo ngi ma ti li polon dogboiham, ti foina hindia lenga lo ke ndakpou nyandeji i totonga a ngi magbua la. A wati ji mia lee na i koni ke faga mia a ndakpeji. Ji woma na i luwe lo wa. Ti lonilo lima Tamui ji i ngi magbua i lolee a kaie gbama. Kia mesii j a hun loni ke i lewenga a piimi, i wiimi lo hann, ke ngafe ji ngi huilo huen. Ti lilo a ngi i ngi ke.

Listeners: Gbo ji ye mbui le?

Story Teller: Ngohon gbonda ma ii nen

68
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 young man. 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
Ngï wa mui?
Ndî mia bi pie ma?
Bi ya nga va ngi ma hoe

Bi totoa a mehec yiila?

Njei ji a gulo bi va

Bi ya gc milo?
Woogba ngï ya foi na
Saange mia ngï gbua na
Ngï ya ha a ngï 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 pandan
Ngï lima a gooma welo
Nya longo a ye pekei
Waa a peka
Ii na
Taa na
Lampoi longa
Kelc ngï to
Konsle nde gboma
Ti gc a nge
Bi humenga?
Yembui a gbôo?
Ta ye boi ji loi Mende yie hun

Bia ii le/Bia ya na
Bii ya kpooyo le?
Ngï kpooyo
Ti bi lei mi lo?
Wa mbe kaka
Wu kckc yakpe?
Nji main lo nya ma
Nja gboomei lo nya ma
Wa a njei ngi kpooe
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 mbc

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

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

We kpec i le (yana)
Mu venjo kpec
Yekclemayei
Yesembei
Yehaalseyei
Ndondoi lo nya ma
Ngi nyahei lo koihun
Mu li baa la

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
Gowo'hini - Big toe
Gombui - Lower part of belly
Gbatoi - Back teeth
Hamei - Hip/waist
Hok pui - Navel
Kakei(yakei) - Rib
Kowe(gowe) - Foot/leg
Kpaki - Shoulder/upper arm
Kple - Beard
Kponi - Penis
Lagui - Lip
Lokoyui - Finger
Mbulei - Neck
Ngami - Face, eye
Ngombi - Knee
Njombui - Hair of body
Ngundiei - Hair of head
Njate(late) - Vein
Ncyi - Liver
Ngoli - Ear
Kole - Skin
Tokoi - Hand
Ngotui - Buttocks
Pomei(womei) - Back
Yakei - Side

Dihun galei - Backbone
Gowowoma - Tendon at back of foot
Gowoyui - Toe
Gbowi - Ankle
Hakai - Calf
Jovotei - Testicles
Kale (gale) - Backbone
Kwoledokoi - Left hand
Kpale - Thigh
Kpambui - Armpit
Kponi - Brain
Kpokpoe - Chin
Lokovcle - Palm
Lokohini - Thumb
Mbule - Penis
Ngama gbekei - Eyebrow/eyelash
Ngengalui - Fingernail
Ndenge - Pubic Hair
Ngonge - Back of head
Nyini - Breasts
Nokoi - Elbow
Kowodicibi - Heel
Koigoi - Belly
Yejalokoi - Right hand
Ndimei - Chest

Trees, Plants, etc.

Nguli - Tree
Foni - Elephant grass
Kowui - Wood
Tife - Leaf, twig
Mbekoi - Branch
Nyui - Corn
Kowoi - Fallen tree
Hewe wuli - Tree with a medicinal fruit
Yogui - Tree (stains cloth)
Nguwe - Silk cotton tree
Tijoi - Hardwood with fibrous bark
Semi - A big forest tree

Kpiti - Grass
Ngale - Very tall coarse grass
Ndawei - Leaf
Kale - Seed
Pote - Millet
Koji - Garden eggs
Njawuli - Soap tree/see apple
Yolui - Fibrous of nduvui
Bowuli - Baobab
Kpedei - Red hardwood tree
Mbali - Hardwood tree with buttress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mbei</th>
<th>- Rice</th>
<th>Nyokoe</th>
<th>- Sugar cane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kpole</td>
<td>- Egg plant</td>
<td>Keti</td>
<td>- Guinea corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambui</td>
<td>- Tree with</td>
<td>Kpatoli</td>
<td>- A kind of wild walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soft nuts, edible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gboji</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Tree with yellow palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buni</td>
<td>- Baboon apple tree</td>
<td></td>
<td>like fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goyavei</td>
<td>- Guava</td>
<td></td>
<td>with pleasant taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumbe</td>
<td>- Orange tree</td>
<td>Yumbu yambe</td>
<td>- A tree with red fruit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boboe</td>
<td>- Funtania</td>
<td></td>
<td>size of an apple, rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenje</td>
<td>- A rubber vine</td>
<td></td>
<td>skin, red inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobei</td>
<td>- A rubber tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houlei</td>
<td>- Tree with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>juice used for catching birds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reptiles, Fish, etc.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nyi</th>
<th>- Fish</th>
<th>Kenj gui</th>
<th>- Tree snake, thin with brown stripes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndili</td>
<td>- Python</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndo vo kpoli</td>
<td>- Poisonous small fat snake</td>
<td>Nguli</td>
<td>- Black snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndawudu gali</td>
<td>- Green snake long</td>
<td>Ndambé</td>
<td>- Crocodile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pami</td>
<td>- Iguana</td>
<td>Koli</td>
<td>- Red-headed lizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpeni</td>
<td>- Speckled lizard</td>
<td>Kogo-njei</td>
<td>- Slow worm; each head at each end, tail same shape as head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndokuli</td>
<td>- Chameleon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngakui</td>
<td>- Grab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiben</td>
<td>- Bull-frog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbasonde</td>
<td>- Green tree frog</td>
<td>Ndo voi</td>
<td>- Toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kondui</td>
<td>- Small fish found in mangrove swamps</td>
<td>Kpegbi</td>
<td>- Croaking frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bansowé</td>
<td>- Fleshy coloured climbing frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenji</td>
<td>- Fresh water flying fish</td>
<td>Hakui</td>
<td>- Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali</td>
<td>- Snake</td>
<td>Bonge</td>
<td>- Bonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupui</td>
<td>- Puff-adder</td>
<td>Tumúi</td>
<td>- Shark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Birds**

<p>| Kokogbie  | - Grey eagle       | Sekuli    | - Small speckled hawk chases small birds/chickens |
| Sckpendei | - Grey hawk        |          |                                          |
| Yibe      | - Vulture          |          |                                          |
| Gomi      | - Black &amp; white crow |        |                                          |
| Kpovovui  | - Green pigeon     | Sasaloi  | - Red-legged partridge. Feeds more at night |
| Gawai     | - Clock-bird       |          |                                          |
| Kpiangbie | - Hornbill         |          |                                          |
| Mbakui    | - Weaver bird      |          |                                          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powi</th>
<th>Pigeon</th>
<th>Hokei</th>
<th>Guinea fowl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bomukuli</td>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>Kokoye</td>
<td>Bush fowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabui</td>
<td>Parrot</td>
<td>Fokuloi</td>
<td>Small brown partridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakiboi</td>
<td>King fisher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feeds on ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techini</td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toucan-two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowui</td>
<td>Duck</td>
<td></td>
<td>headed bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogbotoi</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Gule</td>
<td>Brown bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonemgbe</td>
<td>Egret; body</td>
<td>Nduli</td>
<td>with white breast and mornful cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>white, beak</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowe</td>
<td>Large black</td>
<td>Tei</td>
<td>Owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and white</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eagle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geli</td>
<td>Brown fish</td>
<td>Tectoi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hawk</td>
<td>Mbuui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingi</td>
<td>Grey wading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Palms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokpoi</th>
<th>Palm tree</th>
<th>Nduvui</th>
<th>Raffia, vinifera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi</td>
<td>Bamboo</td>
<td>Keli</td>
<td>Sharp-leafed palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keni</td>
<td>Bamboo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaavui</td>
<td>Rattan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inferior date palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puloli</td>
<td>Coconut palm</td>
<td>Mbalui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kewe</td>
<td>Fan palm</td>
<td>Ngavui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Products of Palm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towui</th>
<th>Oil palm nut</th>
<th>Kejui</th>
<th>Fruit of raffia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaje</td>
<td>Piasava</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raffia cane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokpo</td>
<td>Flower of oil</td>
<td>Koni</td>
<td>Palm kernel oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyinii</td>
<td>palm</td>
<td>Dangule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokpo loi</td>
<td>Palm wine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
<td>Kernel</td>
<td>Ngulo gboi</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plants/Flowers, etc**

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

Huei - Animal
Nika hei - Bull
Mbale - Sheep
Ndonde - Pig
Kowi - Jackal
Sugbui - Hyena
Njao - Lion
Kaikuli - A ground squirrel
Ndandakuli - Mongoose
Pewi - Bush cat; long tail
Gone - Cat
Tcewe - Bush goat
Hagbei - Weasel
Nyini - Rat
Lendoi - Mouse
Bovi - Wood squirrel
Gulei - Baboon
Towe - Big black monkey with long tail
Nyomui - Gorilla
Ndope - Antelope/deer
Nike - Cow

- Goat
- Leopard
- Small animal like guinea pig
- Small animal; sharp nose and mouth set underneath
- Big spotted bush cat. Hair rather than fur
- Bush cat; soft fur, spotted
- Ant-eater
- Bush cow
- Dog
- Ground pig
- Guinea pig
- Bat/small
- Bat/medium
- Elephant

Insects

Fuhani - Insects in general
Foi - Big biting fly
Komi - Bee
Siloi - Spider
Kekemi - Scorpion
Kowongaa - Driving ants
Pctui - Grasshopper
Kpakpadei - Dragon fly
Kongowetui - Grey stripped locust not hurtful
Kpee - Caterpillar
Kpindi - Cicada
Leleme - Praying mantis
Divovoi - Fly that bores holes in trees and bites
Ndi - Fly
Jokondi - Tarantula

- Beetle that rolls a ball of dung
- Millipede
- Centipede
- Mosquito
- Wasp
- White ants
- Snail
- Small ants
- A big edible cricket
- Locust - destructive kind
- Cockroach
- Jigger
- Borer
- Moth
- Big white grub in oil palm
### Spiritual Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ngeowo</th>
<th>God</th>
<th>Ndobleisia</th>
<th>- Inhabitants of the lower world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngelegohun</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Spirit; abstract or material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngelemahun</td>
<td>Land of living</td>
<td>Ngafe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mdo</td>
<td>Lower world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hnaiwai</td>
<td>Devil, spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Natural Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kpeteihun</th>
<th>Swamp with running water</th>
<th>Tumbekel</th>
<th>- Stars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fofowaihun</td>
<td>Large clearing in the bush</td>
<td>Fofoi</td>
<td>- Swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ngiei</td>
<td>- Clearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pope</td>
<td>- Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popawai</td>
<td>Large lake</td>
<td>Ko</td>
<td>- Pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpundohun</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Bulomi</td>
<td>- East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpolilei</td>
<td>River mouth, entrance in the man-</td>
<td>Bulihun</td>
<td>- Flat ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grooves</td>
<td>Kpoli</td>
<td>- Ground raised above water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Furniture/Utensils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibi</th>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Pului</th>
<th>- Pillow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kpukoi</td>
<td>Bed</td>
<td>Kana</td>
<td>- Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenti</td>
<td>Mosquito net</td>
<td>Ndivali</td>
<td>- Broom/fly brush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpangbe</td>
<td>Broom</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Spoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fei</td>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>Mite</td>
<td>- Knife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foki</td>
<td>Fork</td>
<td>Mbowe</td>
<td>- Glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sani</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Glasi</td>
<td>- Plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bole</td>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Pleti</td>
<td>- Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalui</td>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>Mene</td>
<td>- Clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajii</td>
<td>Bucket</td>
<td>Klokii</td>
<td>- Wooden comb used by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasi</td>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>Kpegbe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komui</td>
<td>English comb</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sambe</td>
<td>Broad open basket</td>
<td>Konde</td>
<td>- Mortar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gitii</td>
<td>- Pestle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mboge</td>
<td>- Cutlass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hipoi</td>
<td>- Heavy hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gbanyi</td>
<td>- Pincers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kali</td>
<td>- Hoe</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goli</td>
<td>- Scissors</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ndoli</td>
<td>- Hook</td>
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<td>Metal</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Translation</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kani gboli</td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Tongoi</td>
<td>Brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kani goli</td>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>Koli</td>
<td>Iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongoboli</td>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>Sumbui</td>
<td>Lead</td>
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**Colours**

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<th>Colour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kole</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Teli</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulu</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Telingo</td>
<td>It is black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ngahunpui</td>
<td>Assorted/</td>
<td>Kpou</td>
<td>Red/brown</td>
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<td>variegated</td>
<td>Punch</td>
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**Other Useful Words**

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<th>Translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sewescwe</td>
<td>Very clean</td>
<td>Ndembé</td>
<td>Delay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kpakpawui</td>
<td>Ladder</td>
<td>Ndogboi</td>
<td>Bush</td>
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<td>Juumbui</td>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>Kaye(gaye)</td>
<td>Confession</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sinner</td>
<td>Nanyeii</td>
<td>Sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kpongbo</td>
<td>Pound/grind/iron</td>
<td>Mbili</td>
<td>Drum</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Tavei</td>
<td>Pipe</td>
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<td>Yemoi</td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td>Koti</td>
<td>Stone</td>
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<td>Mbilei/</td>
<td>Father-in-law</td>
<td>Kawo</td>
<td>Peel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mblei</td>
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<td>Paweii</td>
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<td>Kpongbo</td>
<td>Pound/grind/iron</td>
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</table>
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