



**African Academy of Languages
(ACALAN)**

**Harmonized orthographies and writing
systems of the Cinyanja / Chichewa,
Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan Vehicular
Cross-Border Languages**

b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o p r s t u w v y' m nd nj ng
q z kwa b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o p r s t u w v y' m
nd nj ng q z y fy gw gy kw ky kw ky sh ts gb kp, n e o dz kh
ph ps th ts a b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o p r s t u w v y'
m nd nj ng q z kwa b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o p r s t u
w v y' m nd nj ng q z y fy gw gy kw ky kw ky sh ts gb kp, j
e o dz kh ph ps th ts a b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o p r s
a w v y' m nd nj ng q z kwa b b c d d e f g h i j k l m n ñ ñ o
p r s t u w v y' m nd nj ng q z y fy gw gy kw ky kw ky sh ts
gb kp, n e o dz kh ph ps th ts a b b c d d e f g j k l

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Acronyms

1.	ACALAN :	African Academy of Languages
2.	ADEA :	Association for the development of Education in Africa
3.	BREDA :	Regional Bureau for Education in Africa
4.	AU	African Union
5.	CASAS	Centre for Advanced Studies of African Languages
6.	CELHTO :	Center for Linguistic & Historical Study of Oral Tradition
8.	CONFEMEN :	Conference of Ministers of National Education of French-speaking Countries .
9.	ECOWAS :	Economic Community of West African States
10.	FULCOM	Fulfulde Commission
10.	IPE :	Institute for Popular Education
11.	MAPE	MandenPeul
12.	OIF :	International Organisation of the Francophonie
13.	SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
14.	UIL :	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
15.	UNESCO :	The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is a specialized institution of the African Union whose mandate is to empower African languages so that they can be used in all domains of the society in partnership with the languages inherited from colonization, namely English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

In pursuit of fulfilling its mandate and objective, ACALAN and its partners carried out extensive work on “National Policy: the Role of Vehicular Cross-Border Languages and the Place of Lesser-used Languages in Africa,” subsequently selecting forty-one Vehicular Cross-Border Languages to be the focus of its work in the coming years. Out of the forty-one Vehicular Cross-Border Languages, twelve were retained for the first phase, and a Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission to be established for each of the twelve languages.

These Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions are one of the working structures¹ of ACALAN at grass-root level and, as such, their mandate include empowering the language, coordinating and establishing synergies with institutions dealing with the promotion and development of African languages. The language commissions comprise of experts in the Vehicular-Cross Border Languages drawn from the countries where the languages are spoken. Their work focuses on fact-finding, research and advocacy. They also work towards language promotion and encouraging the use of the language as a working language in public domains, as well as encouraging production of literary, pedagogic and technical material for the language.

ACALAN's Executive Secretariat is continuing to establish Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions, in collaboration with its partners. The major challenge facing the institution, however, is to render the two working structures as viable forces to accompany it to fulfilling its mandate.

The twelve languages retained for the first phase according to a set of criteria defined by the Assembly of Academicians of ACALAN are as follows:

- Betifang and Lingala for Cenntral Africa
- Kiswahili, Malagasy and Somali for East Africa

- Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan for West Africa
- Cinyanja / Chichewa for South Africa, and
- Modern Standard Arabic and Berber for North Africa

In 2010 and 2011 the Executive Secretariat of ACALAN in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities and the Ministries of Culture of member states of the African Union, launched an extensive campaign to established (ten out of) the twelve Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions of the first phase,ⁱⁱ and identify the priority areas and prepare plans that would guide their activities during their three-year tenure. These plans were designed to be translated into tangible and implementable projects in collaboration with ACALAN's partners, particularly concerning the technical support and the mobilization of funds for the implementation of the projects. One of the major areas that have been unanimously identified by the Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions is the Harmonization and Standardizationⁱⁱⁱ of the writing systems of the languages concerned.

Language harmonization, which refers to developing a common version of a language based on their mutual intelligibility, ranging from vocabulary to grammar, for the different regional varieties, is an essential component language empowerment. Harmonisation and standardisation do not, however, only allow uniformity in the writing system of these languages, they also make learning materials available for mother tongue literacy campaigns. Harmonisation does not also only aim at eroding differences but maximising resources and minimising cost. A book on Mandenkan produced or purchased in the Gambia is usable in Mali and all the other countries in which Mandenkan is spoken, because a book written by a Mandenkan author in the Gambia would also contain the other version of Mandenkan.

The prospective use of the Vehicular Cross-Border Languages as official languages, languages of instruction as well as working languages of the Regional Economic Communities together with English, French and Portuguese will also be an opportunity to use the harmonised and standardised forms of the languages; hence the involvement of ECOWAS and other Regional Economic Communities and UNESCO in ACALAN's harmonization exercise.

The problem of finding practical and uniform methods of writing African languages has aroused widespread interest from various quarters. Scholars

and Institutions alike have been making various attempts at giving a response to this problem. Attempts had therefore always been made to design a conventional method of transcribing and or writing African languages, so as to align the various systems of transcription of the languages belonging to the same family. The first conscious attempt to harmonize the orthographies of African languages was in the 1930s when the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures published the Practical Orthography of the African Languages in London. The recommendations of the Institute have become a pillar for other works on African Languages orthography.

Amongst the various attempts to harmonise African languages was the Bamako meeting on the harmonization of the major West African languages in 1966, held with the support of UNESCO. In 1975 a meeting was held in Cotonou to harmonise and standardise the alphabets of the Languages of the sub-region comprising Ghana, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Niger, Togo and Dahomey (now Benin), and the 1978 experts meeting on harmonization in Niamey.

Most harmonization workshops, including the experts meeting in Niamey:

...considered the scientific work which has been done and examined some practical applications such as transcription equipment, special keyboards and texts produced in African languages, finally proposing an alphabet called the "African Reference Alphabet" for consideration by individual researchers, research institutions and the political authorities who are going to have to make the necessary decisions. They took into account both phonetic criteria and the problems of graphical production, as well as the characters already used by those concerned. (Meeting on the Transcription and Harmonisation of African Languages, 1978)

In pursuit of its mandate and objective the Executive Secretariat of ACALAN has, according to the priority areas and recommendations of the Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions undertaken a series of harmonisation exercise of the Vehicular Cross-Border Languages. So far two regional harmonisation workshops involving the five Vehicular Cross-Border Languages of Southern and West Africa have taken place. The first

that took place in Bamako, Mali, between July 14 and 16, 2010, involved the Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan languages. The second took place in Gaborone, Botswana, on 29 and 30 May 2011, and involved the Cinyanja / Chichewa and Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Languages in Southern Africa.

The main objective of the harmonisation and standardisation exercise of Vehicular Cross-Border languages is to review the outcomes of earlier works on harmonization concerning these languages, identify areas that still need to be addressed, and recommend the way forward in terms of what needs to be done to address the lack of implementation of the decisions taken on earlier workshops.

This book on the harmonisation of the Vehicular Cross-Border Languages is the result of the two harmonisation exercises conducted in Southern and West Africa. ACALAN is expressing its profound appreciation for the support of its partners which has made all this work possible.

Technical reports

**Fulfulde VCBL Commission
technical report**

Fulfulde Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission technical report

The Fulfulde Commission constituted a working group focused on issues related to harmonization of spelling, grammar and the enrichment of the vocabulary as well as terminology development. The working group worked on three documents available in the countries in which the language is spoken.

- a. Rules of Transcription of the National Languages of Niger, Niger.
- b. Decree No. 2005-988 of 21 October 2005 for the Spelling and hyphenation of Pulaar, Senegal
- c. The harmonization of the spelling of Fulfulde by Dr. Boureima Gnalibouly DICKO, Secretary of the Fulfulde Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission, Mali.

After analysing the three documents, the working group found that the various documents were very closely related. Also, the group agreed to consider the document from Senegal as the basis of their work. On the basis of the analysis of these documents, especially the one from Senegal, the working group agreed on the following spelling rules of Fulfulde.

General Results:

I- Spelling of Fulfulde:

1.1- Graphemes of Fulfulde

The 2010 Bamako harmonization workshop retained the following thirty consonants and five vowels for the writing of Fulfulde:

N°	Small	Capital	Examples	Translation
	a	A	Amde	dance
	b	B	Baaba	father
	ɓ	Ɓ	Bokki	baobab
	c	C	Cumu	fire
	d	D	Diidol	feature
	ɗ	Ɗ	ɗaanaade	sleep
	e	E	Elo	monitor
	f	F	Faandu	flask
	g	G	Gaynaako	shepherd
	h	H	Haala	language
	i	I	Ilam	water of flood

N°	Small	Capital	Examples	Translation
	j	J	Jam	peace
	k	K	Kosam	milk
	l	L	Lamam	salt
	m	M	Maaro	rice
	n	N	Naange	sun
	ñ	Ñ	Ñaamde	eat
	ŋ	D	Dari	beauty
	o	O	Oolol	Yellow color
	p	P	puccu	horse
	r	R	remde	cultivate
	s	S	sumde	burn
	t	T	Tobo	rain
	u	U	ullundu	cat
	w	W	waasde	lose
	y	Y	yahde	go, walk
	y'	Y	y'eewde	look at
	'	?	na'i	cow
	mb	Mb	mbaalu	sheep
	nd	Nd	ndamndi	billy goat
	nj	Nj	njamndi	iron
	ng	Ng	ngaari	ox
	q	Q	Qur'aana	koran
	z	Z	zakaat	alms
	v	V	vamnde	dokey

Consonants: b, ɓ, c, d, ɗ, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ñ, ŋ, p, r, s, t, w, y, y', ' , mb, nd, nj, ng, q, z, v.

vowels : a, e, i, o, u.

1.2- Writing rules of Fulfulde

The working group retained the following writing rules of Fulfulde:

Rule 1: The glottal stop in intervocalic position is denoted.

Examples:

be'i	"goats"
na'i	"cows"
o wi'ii	"he said"

o fa'ii Dakar	"he is in Dakar"
---------------	------------------

Rule 2: Germination in Fulfulde exists only in internal position. It is relevant and is noted at each performance.

Examples:

Nedfo	"person"
mbabba	"donkey"
foggol	"rope"
elle	"default"
lekki	"tree, medicine"
sammunnde	"hedgehog"

Rule 3: In the case of a fortuitous encounter between a nasal consonant and a stop consonant, the spelling respects the original form of the nasal consonant.

Examples:

han̄ki	"yesterday"
hande	"bray"
lekki njanki	"fallen tree"

Rule 4: The vowel system of Fulfulde is based a relevant opposition in length. A long vowel corresponds to each short vowel.

Short vowels			Long vowels		
a	omo hula	"he is afraid"	aa	omo hulaa	"It is feared"
e	sekde	"to get angry"	ee	seekde	« déchirer »
i	silde	"to decompose, to analyse"	ii	siilde	"to come to an end (a season)"
o	morde	"to remove bones"	oo	moorde	"to plait"
u	hulde	"to be afraid"	uu	huurde	"to recover"

Rule 5: In speech chain, contractions may occur, depending on the dialects, between words that form separate graphic units. The written form does not take account of these contractions.

Examples:

baali e be'i	[ba :le :be'i]	"Sheep and Goats"
so a arii	[sa :'ari :]	"If you come"

Noun, determiner and its substitutes

Rule 6: Fulfulde is a language with noun classes. The generic name is formed from the radical nominal suffixed morpheme class. This form is also one of the **indefinite nouns**.

Examples:

Neddo	"Person / a person"
suudu	"hut/ a hut"
Yimbe	"Persons / people"
wuro	"village / a village"
nagge	"cow / a cow"

Rule 7: The nominal classifier has several functions.

- If placed **before** the noun, it plays the role of a demonstrative determiner and is separately written with its final long vowel, for the final vowel classifiers

Examples:

oo neddo	"This person"
nduu suudu	"This hut"
bee yimbe	"These people"
ngoo wuro	"This village"
ngee nagge	"This cow"

- Placed **after** the noun, it plays the role of definite determiner and is separated from the written noun, always with the final long vowel.

Examples:

Neddo oo	"This person"
suudu nduu	"This hut"
Yimbe bee	"These people"
wuro ngoo	"This village"

nagge ngee	"This cow"
-------------------	------------

When the classifier plays the role of substitute noun, it is written with its final short vowel.

Examples:

wuro ngoo	"The village"
mi anndaa ngo	"I do not know him "
ngo hodaaka	" It is not inhabited"

Rule 8: The classifier with a demonstrative value may be specified by an adverb of place indicating the proximity or distance (doo, daa, too, gaa). In this case, the two words are written separately.

Examples:

oo doo suka	"this young man there "
Oo gaa gorko	"This man here [on our side]"
ndee too lowre	"This plot there"
Oo daa gorko	"This man [next]"

Rule 9: The noun is separately written from the possessive determiner.

Examples:

debbo makko	"his wife"
gawri mabbe	" their millet"

Rule 10: The possessive determiner **am** of the first person singular, though it is pronounced in relation to the preceding word, in some dialects is written separate from this one.

Examples:

hoore am	[hooram]	"my head"
suudu am	[suudam]	"my room"
laawol am	[laawolam]	"my way"

Rule 11: The possessive suffix specific to some kinship terms are attached to the name. These suffixes are:

- In singular : -a/-e, -iiko, -um
- In plural : -en, -on, -iibe

Examples:

Esa/ese	"Your step-parent"
Njaata/njaate	"Your grandfather"
Taana/taane	"Your grandson or your daughter"
taaniiko	"His grandson"
mawnum	"his/her elder" or "his/her elder sister"
mawnen	"our elder brother" or "our elder sister"

Rule 12: The interrogative, indefinite, numeral or relative determiner is separately written from the word it determines.

Examples:

hol galle ?	"Which house? "
no foti ?	"How much is it? "
mande 6e ngari ?	"When did they come? "
galleeji nayi	"Four houses"
galle nayafo	"Fourth house"
galle mo cood-mi oo	"The house that I bought "
galle godfo	"Another house"
Galle gooto	"A house (any)"

1.4. Verb and verbal modalities

Rule 13: In conjugation, subjects-pronouns are indicated as in the table below:

Persons	Sim ple	Durative or complex	Emphatic	Post-positive
1 st sg.	mi	Mido	miin	-mi
2 nd sg.	a	Ada	aan	-daa/-aa
3 rd sg.	o	Omo	Kanko/Oo(n)	-

1 st pl.inclusi ve	en	Eɗen	enen	-ɗen/-en
1 st pl.exclusi ve	min	Miɗen	minen	
2 nd pl.	on	Oɗon	onon	-ɗon/-on -ɗee/-ee
3 rd pl.	be	ebe	kambe/bee(n)	-

If placed before the verb, the subject – pronoun is separately written.

Examples:

a ñaamii	"You ate"
omo ñaama	"He is eating"

If placed after the verb, the subject personal pronoun is attached to the radical when it begins with a vowel, but there is a hyphen between them, when it begins with a consonant.

Examples:

ñaamen !	"let us eat"
looton	" (You) Wash"

But :

ñaam-ɗen	"We ate"
loot-ɗon	"You washed"

The complex and durative forms considerably vary from one dialect to another or from a variety to the other. For example **mide**, **mida**, **emi**, **Mine**, **Mina**; **ada**, **hida**, **himo**, **imo**, etc.. Thereafter, we will propose approved alternatives in the context of harmonization.

Rule 14: With the exception of e-suffixed form of the object second person singular, all personal pronouns, articles or supplements, are written separately.

Examples

ma mi totte	"I will give you"
ma mi tottu ma	"I will give you"
o nelii e am	"He sent me to you"
ma mi totte ngo	"I will give it to you (ngo class)"
galle mum/makko	"his home"

The object personal pronoun inserted into the verb and the postpositive subject pronoun, is separated from the two by two hyphens.

Example:

ko dūm tottu- moo -mi	"This is what I gave him "
------------------------------	-----------------------------------

1.5 - Derivation and composition

Rule 15: For the composition, where the constituents refer to a third entity different from the whole meanings of the elements, they form a compound word and are linked by a hyphen, like the following types of compound words:

- words composed of a verb and an adverb:
fabbi-janngo [finish-tomorrow] "the day after-tomorrow"
- words composed of a verb and a noun :
war-hoore [kill-head] "murder"
- Words composed of a qualifying verb and a qualifying word:
wela-demngel [the little forked tongue] "talkative"
- words composed of two nominals:
yitere-ngaari [eye-ox] "(name of a plan)"
deftel-Alla [booklet-God] "butterfly"
hudo-hecco [herb – fresh] "green color"

Rule 16: In a determinative phrase, when the primary meaning of the components of a compound noun is found in the meaning of the designated unit, they are written separately.

Examples:

joom wuro	[Village owner] "chief of the village "
laana njoorndi	[land vehicle] "train"

Rule 17: In Fulfulde derivatives are written as one word, even in cases of radical reduplication. Examples:

saggitorde	/sagg-it-o-r-de/	"Dictionary"
yankinaare	/yan-kin-aa-re/	"Humility"
wiwiIndu	/wil-wil-ndu/	"Bat"
sorsortude	/sor-sor-t_-u-de/	"To move back and forth"
fiyfiyre	/fiy-fiy-re/	"Crocodile Hunting"
fulfulde	/ful-ful-de/	"Fulfulde language "

Rule 18: In case of complete repetition of the same word, the elements are written with a hyphen.

Examples:

Seese-seese => "Gently - gently (gently)

Law-law => "Fast - fast (very fast)"

Laame-laame => "Trace-trace" (scurf patch)

Rule 19: The compound nouns designating villages (or elsewhere) are written with a hyphen to make a difference with the possessive noun syntagm.

Examples:

Wuro-Ardō

Maayo- Kumbe

Wuro-Ngiya

Rule 20: The foreign words are written as they are heard and pasted, even if it is not the case in the original language.

Examples:

Leemburuba (orange) from *Bamanankan leemburu* (lemon) + **ba** (big)

Gorobone (gentleman) from *French big shot*

Negejuru (wire) from *Bamanankan nègè* (iron) + **ju** (wire)

Kutupon (punch) from *French coup de poing*.

1.6- Punctuation

Rule 21: The punctuation marks used in Fulfulde are:

English	Signs	Fulfulde
Full stop	.	Tobbere
End full stop	.	Tobbere daayorde
colon	:	Tobbe didi

Ellipsis	...	Tobbe jowe
Question mark	?	Tobbere naamnal (lamndorde)
Exclamation mark	!	Tobbere haawtorde
Comma	,	piccal
Semicolon	;	Tobbere e piccal
Dash	-	diidel
Hyphen	-	diidel jokkere
Bracket	()	laaŋe
Quotation marks	« »	ŋaace

Rule 21: The initial of the proper names are written in capital letters at the beginning of sentences, verses, acronyms and titles.

Examples:

Aamadu	“Amadou” (proper name of person)
Boosoya	“Bosséa” (proper name of province)
Ngal teddungal ina timmi	“This is a perfect honor”
Fedde Bamtoore Pulaar (FBP)	“ Association for the Renaissance of Pulaar”

TEXT ILLUSTRATION

Danngal Ndikkiri

Ndikkiri ina jayllo, ina miiɗoo ñaldi mum mettudi e mette de naalanɗaagu toodani ñum, gila ñande o yenni galle Hammadi Garba'en haa oon ummanii warde mbo, o dogi. Jooni kadi ñemngal makko boccitiima mbo haa o yenni laamu, te ko o jogorɗo sekeede e yooloyeede to o artataa. E ngol, so o dadii, o woppat naalanɗaagu, o ñabba gollal godngal, o wuura heen.

Yimbe laamu bee ina mbaaldi e tikkere mumen, pini, ina njidi nanngude Ndikkiri. Kono o tawaaka e suudu makko ño o wonnoo ñoo. Be nji'aani so wonaa moolo e buubaa. Be nganndaa so o diw valla o sor ; so leydi modi mbo walla o safa, be nganndaa. Neddo fof wi'ataa ma ko ñoo o naati.

TRANSLATION

The trip of Ndikkiri

Ndikkiri was walking and thinking of his many setbacks days and challenges that life as an artist, had created since the day he insulted the family of Hamady Garba who wanted to kill him and where he fled from. This time his tongue has betrayed him to the point of insulting the authorities.....

This time, if he manages to get out of it, he will give up the life of artist to pursue an alternative livelihood.

The people at court have pondered their resentment throughout the night and when they woke up, they tried to catch Ndikkiri.

But nobody found him in the room where he was. They found there only the single-string guitar and a small tom-tom. They did not know whether he has vanished or dissolved in nature, whether he has disappeared under earth or in heavens; no one knew. Nobody could say where he was.

II. GRAMMAR AND LEXICAL ENRICHMENT

After these consensual conclusions on the writing systems of the language, the Fulfulde Commission worked on the following two priority issues which were considered in Abuja in 2009 and confirmed in Dakar in 2010, but which had no follow up: the development of an inter dialectal grammar and a set of lexical and terminology enrichment elements to be included in the file of the process of standardizing the Fulfulde language.

The following results, in line with the 2010 Dakar Action Plan have been considered:

2.1. – Inter dialectal grammar

Participants noted that beyond the lexical differences between dialects, one of the factors blocking the circulation of documents between regions is the ignorance of most speakers of corresponding grammatical forms between dialects. These disparate forms, although limited, have a very high occurrence in the language and are unavoidable. In reading, they can easily become a blocking factor.

Therefore, to overcome this constraint, it is important that speakers of different dialects be trained to recognize and integrate the corresponding grammatical forms of the other dialects. Hence the need to develop an inter dialectal grammar document which will be supported and promoted by Fulcom.

2.2. Lexicography and Terminology

In this area, the following operational strategies were considered:

- Harmonization of data capture cards
- Harmonization of the working methodology
- Choice of the themes to be dealt with
- Choice of the numbers of preliminary cards to develop
- Selection of the initiating Country and coordinator and contact persons who are members of FULCOM.

In this regard, the conclusions reached are reflected in the following table.

Domains	Work nature	Number of items	Country in charge	Contact persons / Coordinators
education Meta-language	Lexicon	1000	Guinea	Diallo Alpha Oumar
Environment and Climate Change	Terminology	1500	Senegal	Fary Ka
Human and animal health	Terminology	1000	Mali	Demba Pamanta
ICT	Terminology	500	Burkina	Issa Diallo
Citizenship Education	Lexicon	1000	Cameroon	Aminou Mohamadou
Inter dialectal Grammar	Grammar handbook	-	Mali	Bouréïma Gnalibouly Dicko
Multi dialectal lexicon of Fulfulde	Lexicon	15 to 25 000 words	Senegal and Diaspora (France)	Fary Ka T. Mbalo Mohamadou Aliou

For all of these research and development works, the Commission retained the following:

- Establishing a strong and consistent network online to facilitate permanent contacts and exchanges,
- Establishing in each country as much as possible, a national multidisciplinary, inclusive, vibrant and united fulcom team so that no useful player be left to the wayside in this long process of promoting Fulfulde as a language of Education and African integration.

**Hausa VCBL Commission
Technical report**

1. Preamble

During the planning workshop held in March 2010 in Abuja, one of the priority activities identified by the Hausa Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission was the development and harmonization of the Hausa orthography. The current workshop is timely because it gives the Commission an opportunity to address this important issue.

Hausa has a well developed orthography as a result of efforts by previous governments and individuals covering a period of over seventy years. UNESCO should be singled out as an important organization that supported the effort of developing and harmonizing Hausa orthography. The first of such effort took place here in Bamako in 1966. Another important organization that contributed to the harmonization of Hausa orthography in Niger and Nigeria is the former OAU through its specialized institution, the CELHTO in Niamey in the early 80's. The details of the contributions made by government agencies, organizations, and individuals, the current problems in the use of Hausa orthography, solutions to these problems and recommendations for specific actions to be taken by stakeholders are covered under appropriate headings in this report.

2. Documentation review and listing

The commission had at its disposal a number of documents, supplied by ACALAN or by commission members, which allowed an overview of the history of Hausa orthography, the dissemination efforts of the orthographies, as well as the various criticisms levelled against successive versions of the orthography. This section lists the most important steps in the development of Hausa orthography and the most relevant documents. The section owes much to the articles by Amfani (2006), Bamgbose (1978), and Bara (2007).

2.1 Meetings, institutions, and issued guidelines or legislations

1912

This year saw the first work establishing rules for Hausa orthography in a document titled "Rules for Hausa spelling" by Hanns Vischer (Director of Education, Northern Region of Nigeria).

1933

The *Literature Bureau* introduced new ways of writing Hausa to reduce the influence of English spelling on Hausa that characterized the Vischer spelling (usage of the letter 'c' instead of English 'ch'; introduction of the

hooked letters, etc.) The Bureau also organized writing competitions and launched journals to implement the new orthography rules.

1938

The government notice No 396 (Nigeria Gazette, 24 March, 1938) mandated the use of new spelling rules, such as the hooked letters, the rule for geminate digraphs, the abandonment of vowel length and tone notations and the distinction between the two 'r' sounds. Some segmentations rules proposed by Bargery (1934) were also incorporated. In 1939, the famous weekly Hausa newspaper "Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo" appeared.

1955

The Hausa Language Board was created by the Northern House of Assembly to harmonize and standardize Hausa orthography in Nigeria. The Hausa Language Board was active only for three years before being dissolved by the colonial administration, wary of the success of the indigenous language to the detriment of English.

1966

UNESCO organized the Bamako meeting of experts for the unification of the alphabets of some African languages. The results of this meeting influenced the practices in Niger, notably, the marking of tones, vowel length, and the diphthongs (*aw*, *ay*) in Hausa orthography. The Nigerian government rejected these innovations (cf. Bamgbose 1978: 13). The consequence of this disagreement was that two different Hausa orthographies were practiced in the two countries.

1970

The non-observance by most users of the orthographic rules enacted by the Hausa Language Board in Nigeria prompted a series of meetings to devise ways to enforce the orthography. One such meeting is the Conference on Orthography held at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

1972

Another such conference is the Conference on Orthography, held at Bayero University Kano, to improve some aspects of Hausa orthography, in particular the use of the letter 'f' to represent a set of non-contrasting voiceless labial sounds (and some surface 'h'-sounds), the use of diphthongs 'ai, au' instead of 'ay, aw'.

1980

At the international level, differences still exist between Niger and Nigeria orthographic practices. To address this issue, the OAU sponsored the Meeting of Experts on the Harmonization of Hausa Orthography at CELHTO in Niamey, Niger. At this meeting, the Republic of Niger

essentially dropped its Bamako 1966-inspired orthography and overall adopted the orthography practiced in Nigeria.

1981

Niger issued a ministerial decision that suspends the Bamako 1966-inspired orthography and enforces the CELTHO harmonized orthography.

1999

Niger issued yet another decision on Hausa orthography that suspends the 1981 decision and mandates an orthography that comes even closer to the practice in Nigeria. The main change concerns the capitalization of diphthongs and digraphs (in the new decision, only the first letter of the cluster is capitalized).

2.2 Textbooks disseminating Hausa orthography

1964

Kirk-Greene, A.H.M.. The Hausa Language Board. *Afrika und Ubersee* xl.vii, No 3/4.

1967

Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. and Yahaya, Aliyu. *A modern Hausa reader*. London: University of London Press.

1976

Galadanci, M.K.M. *An introduction to Hausa grammar*. Ibadan: Longman.

1977

Abdullahi, M.D. *Tafi: Sabon rubutun Hausa*. Zaria: NNPC.

1979

Institute of Education, ABU, Zaria. *Karatu da rubutu a harshen Hausa: The official guide to Hausa orthography*. Zaria/Lagos: Thomas Nelson Limited.

1980

Jinju, M.H. *Rayayyen nahawun Hausa*. Zaria: NNPC.

1982

Conference at Daula Hotel. *Daidaitacciyar Hausa*. Manuscript.

1986

Bagari, D.M. *Bayanin Hausa: Jagora ga mai koyon ilimin bayanin harshe*. Rabat, Morocco: El-Marif Al-Jedida.

2001

Mahmoud, Ibrahim. *Ka'idojin rubutun Hausa: Don Dalibai marubuta da masu nazari*. Kano: Ahmadu Publishing Network.

2002

Bunza, A.M.. *Rubutun Hausa: Yadda yake da yadd'a ake yin sa; Don masu koyo da koyarwa*. Lagos: Ibrash Islamic Publications Center.

2005

Bello, Said. *Ka'idojin rubutun Hausa*. Kano: Benchmark Publishers.

2.3 Articles dealing with criticism of the orthography

1967

Fishman, J.A. Success and failure in the Modernization of Hausa spelling. *Monograph No 7*.

1981

Gouffé, Claude. *Remarques sur l'orthographe du Hausa*. *Bulletin des Etudes Africaines*, 21, pp. 43-58, Inalco, Paris.

1982

Malka, Jean-Guy. *De l'harmonisation des alphabets et orthographes du Hausa*. *Mu Kara Sani* 1(2), pp.7-32, IRSH.

1982

Yahaya, I.Y. Towards the perfection of writing systems: Examples from Hausa and English orthography. *Harsunan Nijeriya* 12, CSNL, BUK.

2000

Newman, Paul. *The Hausa language: An encyclopedic reference grammar*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2002

Philips, J.E. Hausa Roman orthography: Reform

2002

Philips, J.E. Hausa orthography in the twentieth century. Part 1: Romanization.

(Non dated)

East, R.M. *Hausa Spelling*. Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria.

2007

Mijinguini, Abdou and Mahamane L. Abdoulaye. Standardization of regional African languages and its importance for regional integration in West Africa. In: *Les états-nations face à l'intégration régionale and Afrique de l'Ouest: Le cas du Niger*, Waziri Mato, Maman (dir.), pp. 207-224. Paris: Karthala.

2007

Bara, Souley. A propos de l'orthographe de la langue Hausa: Reflexion critique sous une approche lexicologique. *Mu Kara Sani* 12.

3. Recommendations for a new harmonized Hausa orthography

First, the Commission reviewed the most important papers dealing with the criticism of the various versions of Hausa orthography. The Commission discussed the criticisms, examined their soundness and their relevance, and

then proceeded to make a decision. In a second step, the Commission also examined a few notational conventions that should complement the Hausa orthography.

3.1 Revising the current Hausa orthography

The alphabet in Niger:

Consonants: (32)

‘, b, ɓ, c, d, ɗ, f, fy, g, gw, gy, h, j, k, kw, ky, ƙ, ƙw, ky, l, m, n, (p), r, s, sh, t, ts, w, y, ỵ, z.

Vowels: (5)

a, e, i, o, u.

The alphabet in Nigeria:

Consonants: (30)

b, ɓ, c, d, ɗ, f, fy, g, gw, gy, h, j, k, kw, ky, ƙ, ƙw, ky, l, m, n, r, s, sh, t, ts, w, y, ‘y, z.

Vowels: (5)

a, e, i, o, u.

The major difference between the two countries is the way of representing the glottalized palatal semi-vowel, ‘y’ vs. ỵ. The presence of the letter ‘(p)’ and the glottal stop (‘) in Niger does not represent a true difference because both symbols are present in the writing practices in the two countries.

(1) ‘Y vs. hooked Y

With respect to the alphabet, there is only one true difference between Niger and Nigeria, as stated above. The Niger symbol is nowadays easier to use, due to the availability of modern fonts. The commission recommends the adoption of the Niger symbol, i.e., the hooked ‘ỵ’, in the two countries.

(2) The writing of ‘m’ versus ‘n’ before abutting consonants

Niger should adopt the CELHTO convention to write ‘m’ before labial consonants word-medially, and ‘n’ before non-labial consonants. It has been observed that under certain conditions, users in Niger can write ‘m’ inside words before non labial consonants.

(3) Capitalization of names with multiple words

The Niger decision cites only one-word examples of proper names to illustrate the use of capitalization. The question is, how do we write proper names and toponyms with multiple words? The Commission decides to leave the current practice as is: Use hyphens in toponyms if they contain more than two words.

(4) Compound words

The Commission examined the representation of compounds and decided that the current practices should be maintained.

(5) Universal pronouns *Ko wa* 'whoever' and *kowa* 'everybody, etc.

The current convention makes provision for one word to cover the two meanings. The commission recommends that depending on the intended meaning, the pronouns be written separately or in one word: *kowa* 'everybody' and *ko wa* 'whoever'. This in fact is already the current practice.

(6) *Watau/wato* and similar dialectal variations

The commission asks for authors to remain consistent in their choice of one form.

(7) Bound vs. non bound possessive pronouns

Newman (2000) provides good arguments for writing possessive pronouns on nouns (to express real possession and derived relations) and on verbal nouns (to express verb-direct object relation) in the same way: i.e., as bound pronouns on the host noun/verbal nouns. Currently, the possessive pronoun is written as bound with nouns and unbound with verbal nouns (like the pronouns that are direct object of regular verbs). After discussion, the Commission realized there is no true need for a change and recommends the continuation of current practices.

3.2 Complementing the current Hausa orthography

(8) Notation of "BC" and "AD" in dates

The Commission decides that BC be represented as "KHI" and "AD" as "BHI".

(9) Notation of "AM" and "PM" in denoting time

The Commission decides that "AM" be represented as "ns" and "PM" as "ny". In addition Hausa has other time categorization: "Na rana" can be abbreviated as "nr" (for example, "3:00 PM" as "3:00 nr") and "na dare" as "nd" (for example, "8:00 PM" as "8:00 nd").

(10) Conventions for writing other abbreviations

The Commission retains "ds." (da sauransu) for "etc.". It also recommends the abbreviation "mis." (misali) for "for example" (contrary to the orthography in Niger that recommends "ms.")

4. Implementation of the new harmonized Hausa orthography: The way forward

In order for the harmonized orthography to be widely used, the Commission recommends the following measures:

1. Publish books with the new orthography
2. Production of manuals for the new harmonized orthography
3. Sensitization and advocacy in Niger and Nigeria for the new harmonized orthography: conduct two types of workshops: one for scholars and government agents and one for authors.

4. Writers workshop to write books based on the new harmonized orthography for distribution in schools, literacy centers, health centers, etc.
5. We observe that our right to speak our languages in legislative bodies are not fully utilized. We call on our legislators to use the new harmonized orthography in their documents wherever possible.
6. The Hausa commission recommends that ACALAN publishes a quarterly newsletter in Hausa, Fulfulde, and Mandenkan using the new harmonized orthography.
7. Explain the new harmonized Hausa orthography on back cover of children's notebooks
8. In Niger create and in Nigeria resuscitate the Hausa Language Board or set up any other institution (pedagogical institutes, linguistics departments, language centers, etc.) to watch the observance of the new harmonized orthography in official or commercial (company) signs and announcements.
9. There are at least 5 Hausa language newspapers in Nigeria but none in Niger. The commission recommends that ACALAN advises the Niger governments to consider resuscitating at least one Hausa newspaper in Niger.
10. Finally, the Commission reports that it has a website where it will display the new harmonized orthography and its other activities. The address is: <http://kwamitinhausayolasite.com/>

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**Mandankan VCBL Commission
technical report.**

Mandenkan Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission technical report

1. Context

The Mandenkan working group in their deliberations considered the following varieties of Mandenkan:

- ❖ Bamanankan from Mali
- ❖ Julakan from Burkina FASO
- ❖ Julakan from Côte d'Ivoire
- ❖ Mandinkakan from the Gambia
- ❖ Maninkakan from the Republic of Guinea.

2. Objectifve of the mandenkan commission

The objective of the Mandenkan Commission was to harmonize the writing systems Mandenkan spoken in the various countries represented:

3. Expected Results

An inter-dialectal unified orthography of mandenkan.

4. Working method and process of the working sessions

The working collected the documents relative to the orthography of the Mandenkan in the various countries. These documents and others, (references annexed), enabled the working group to identify the orthography and writing systems of Mandenkan.

The working group adopted the following method:

- Presenting the points to be harmonized
- Going around the table to examine each point of the orthography to be harmonized
- Proposing unified rules
- Adopting, through consensus pertinent propositions and formulating them in common orthographic rules

The group requested Professor Kalilou Tera to present and comment the points he previously submitted to the members of the Commission for the group's reflexion. After presenting the historical background of harmonization through its major steps, MAPE and the CASAS's Meeting in Abidjan, the commission worked according to the following canvas:

- The alphabet
- The tones (lexical and grammatical)
- Segmentation and composition
- Some usual orthographic points (monosyllables, words and special idioms)...

5. Outcomes of the workshop

5.1. The harmonization of the alphabet and orthographic rules

5.2. Perspectives of Mandenkan normalisation

- ❖ Orthographic dictionary that requires:
 - A methodological reflexion
 - The Elaboration of a common working strategy
 - Search for an efficient working tool (software)
- ❖ Pedagogic grammar also requiring:
 - Content specification
 - A methodological reflexion
 - The Elaboration of a common working strategy
 - Search for an efficient working tool (software)

Annexes

- All the working and reference documents
- List of the participants
- TOR ACALAN

A- The Consonants

- The consonants between parenthesis in the harmonized alphabet of Mandenkan (*ref: the orthography harmonized of Mandenkan, page 5*) which created some hesitations were adopted and are not in the alphabet between parenthesis; they are:
 - η, ɲ, gb, kp, v, w, x
- Concerning the writing of the sound [ʃ] with the digraph <sh> in some orthographies and with the letter <s> in others, the Commission opted for <s> because in fact, [ʃ] is only a contextual variety of [s].
- The personal pronoun, first person singular, emphatic form: the Commission decided to adopt **nne** instead of **ne**. The adoption of **nne** is based on the analysis of the paradigm of personal pronouns first person singular simple form and emphatic form:
 - n simple form and nne emphatic form
 - e ~ i simple form and ile ~ ele emphatic form

a – for ale a simple form and ale emphatic form

- For the palatalized consonant, the Commission decided to re-establish the vowel that had been abandoned.

Examples : fye → fiye

bye → biye

- The prenasal consonant the Commission chose : in case of impossibility to choose between the form with the prenasal consonant and a simple form, that is without the prenasal consonant, the prenasal consonant must be kept : nka, Ngolo, nbaa, nsee.

In case of impossibility to choose, the simple form must be chosen and we must conform with the form in the same text.

Examples :

nsiiri → siiri

nsira → sira

nkoni → goni

ntomono → tomono

For the use of capitals and small letters of the consonant which was raised by the participants will be dealt with the second day.

B- The vowels

The points raised are:

- the Commission decided to keep the vowels ε and ɔ: in the alphabet.
- The Commission decided not to keep the expressive vocalic length: caaman, dɔɔnin, foo in writing.
- *The Commission decided to re-establish the vocalic length resulting from the fall of the intervocalic consonant in writing the dropped consone.*

Examples :

taa → taga

waati → wagati

salibaatɔ _____ salibagatɔ

jiibaatɔ _____ jiigibagatɔ

taafe _____ tagafe

- The nasal vowel: The vowel followed by the consonant n must be written

Examples :

Bon “to pour”

tan ‘ten’

den ‘to produce’

fin ‘black’

Conclusions of the first day:

- 1- Alphabet : adopted
- 2- Consonne : Adoption of the letter « s » for the sound [ʃ]
example : it would be written se “chichen” instead of [ʃe
- 3- Personal pronoun (emphatic form and first person singular) : Adoption of “nne” ;
- 4- Palatalized consonant: Re-establishment of the vowel that has dropped
Example : fye, write fiye
- 5- The prenasal consonant are not written
Examples : nsiiri, write siiri
Ntəmɔnɔ, write tɔmɔnɔ

NB : In case of no choice, the prenasal consonne must be kept; ex : *nka*, *ngolo*, *nbaa*, *nsee*.

- 6- Vowels : the vowels ε and ɔ are adopted
- 7- The expressive vocalic length should not be written.
Example : « caaman », you must write « caman »
- 8- Re-establishing the vocalic length resulting in dropping the intervocalic consonant.

Example : taa _____ taga

Mɔɔ _____ mɔɔ

At the beginning of the second day, the Mandenkan Commission subsequently examined and adopted the following points:

- The number of consonants in Mandenkan are 24:
Small lettres:
b, c, d, f, g, gb, h, j, k, kp, l, m, n, ɲ, ɳ, p, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z.
- Capital letters:
B, C, D, F, G, GB, H, J, K, KP, L, M, N, ɲ, ɳ, P, R, S, T, V, W, X, Y, Z.
- The vowels in Mandenkan are 7:
Small letters: a, e, ε, i, o, ɔ, u.
Capital letters : A, E, E, I, O, ɔ, U.
- The use of the capital letters in the following cases:
 - at the beginning of a sentence
 - after a full stop
 - for the initial of proper nouns

- in acronyms.

➤ The nomenclature: the Commission adopted the following nomenclatures :
Bamanankan, Julakan, Maninkakan, Mandinkakan.

➤ The lexical tone :

The Mandenkan commission decided that the notation of the tones is not compulsory.

However, in case of tone notation, reference should be made to the rules drafted in the MAPE context.

➤ **The grammatical tone:** in case of its notation, reference should be made to the rules drafted in the MAPE context which is the postposed apostrophe.

➤ **The segmentation :**

➤ **Are written separatly :**

- the various syntagms of the language ;

- the suffixed qualificative adjectives in -man inside the nominal syntagm and the syntagms with a derivative in -nin ~len ;

examples : muso finman, gese wulenman, tiga barabaranin, malo wusulen.

- the numeral adjectives (cardinal and ordinal) ; examples :

mdk : moo fula “two people”

jlk : kuma filanan

- the interrogative adjectives ; examples : jlk : mobili juman ? Yiri joli ?

- the indefinite adjectives;

examples : bmK : Den caman b’a bolo, Muso dɔ̀bɔ̀ra yan sisan.

- the particles of emphasis ; example in mnk : nne ye ile le fe

- the coordinative ni ; example : Madu ni Fanta nana

- the predicatives inside a verbal syntagm;

examples : Musa ka jan, Musolu bada na,

- the postpositions or post positional locutions ; examples : Ali be taga kungo ra.

- the adverbs ;

examples : a tagara sisan, a k’i bori biribiri.

- the adjectives, adverbs, numerals totally redoubled ;

examples : u ka bon bon, a tagara sisan sisan, a kɛ dɔ̀nin dɔ̀nin, u nana kelen kelen

Beware: In case of partial redoubling write with a hyphen;

examples : na-naani ; du-duuru ; wɔ-wɔɔɔ

➤ **Are written together :**

- the derivatives

- the compound with “tonal compactness” , whatever the category which they belong to.

N + N : examples : sagamuso

N+ V : examples : denwolo

N+ Pp+N : examples : jilafen

N+ Adj. : examples : daje, farafin, nɔnɔkɛnɛ

N+ (adverb) + V: examples : ... ?

- the post positive locutions : jafe “before”, kɔfe “behind”, jana ‘in front of’, kunna “below”, kanma “because of”, senfe “at the same time”, etc.

➤ **- Some cases of usual orthographies:**

Damadɔ ‘a certain number’, dɔwere “another”, kabini “ ago, since”, kamasɔɔ “because”, kasɔɔ “then”, kojugu “too much/many”, kokura “again”, kojuman “well”, kosebe “a lot”, minke “after”, nasɔɔ “maybe”, sebekɔɔ “very well”.

➤ **Are written with a hyphen:**

- the cases of redoubled partials ; examples : na-naani ; du-duuru.

- the compounds without “tonal compactness” (where every element keeps its tonal autonomy) ; examples : tu-filenin “ small whistle of the forest = kind of sparrow”, baba-kerekelen “ that of the ocean (which walks) on one side = crab”

- the redoubled words expressing plurality or repetition ; examples :

- kuru-kuru “boutons ”, tɔni-tɔni “ to taste”, jaman-jaman “ rubbish”.

N.B. : they must be adopted because there is no tonal compactness.

- the conglomerates or fixed phrases used as nouns or as verbs ; examples :

ɛɛ-tɛ-muso-tɛ “hermaphrodite ”

la-n-kan-na “scarf ”

fɔ-ka-bɛn “verbal understanding ”

don-n-kɔnɔ “ poison”

ta-ka-yuguyugu “ second hand clothing store”

don-ka-file “second hand clothing store ”

ta-ka-pɛɛ “ ? ”

➤ **The personal pronouns:**

Emphatic pronouns in bamanankan, in julakan of Burkina and in julakan of Côte d'Ivoire :

- First person plural emphatic form : anw ~ annugu
- Second person plural emphatic form: aw ~ alugu
- Third person plural emphatic form: olu ~ulu ~ olugu

Emphatic pronouns in mandinkakan

nte ntelu

ite atelu

ate itelu

Dr Mohamadou Diallo from Burkina Faso submitted the following points for examination:

➤ **The elision :**

- The Commission decided to apply elision only to final vowels of the marks or auxiliaries of the verb and those of the coordinatives ani and ni.

➤ **Borrowed words:**

- The Mandenkan Commission decided to write them in conformity with phonetic and phonologic structures in Mandenkan.

➤ **Neologisms:** to be tackled in the context of the elaboration of specialized lexis.

➤ **Acronyms :** to write the form in Mandenkan preceded by the original form in French.

➤ **Date :** to adopt all the three forms proposed:

➤ **The names of the months in the year :** link “kalo” to the name of the month.

➤ **The days in the week:** it is not orthographic.

➤ **Quotations :** idem

➤ **Abbreviations :** examples :

- etc. = onaw, odw, atk
- cf. = atf
- N.B. = Jt
- 1er = flo
- 2nan
- Insertion of the quotations
- Some abbreviations

**Cinyanja / Chichewa VCBLC
technical report.**

GENERAL HARMONISED SPELLING RULES

1. Cinyanja/Chichewa has five qualitative vowels and each vowel quality consists of a long and short vowel. Thus, the orthography will maintain the five-vowel system. In written texts, the default rule is to use short vowels: predictable vowel length need not be shown. However, where vowel length is phonemic, it should be represented by long vowels (i.e. vowel doubling).^{iv}
2. Cinyanja/Chichewa has consonants which are generally written as they are pronounced.
3. When two or three vowels follow one another they are separated by a glide (/w/ or /y/ depending on the nature of the vowel) e.g. *io* → *iwō*, *iai* → *iyayi*.
4. Although tone has grammatical implications in the language, to avoid excessive use of diacritics, tone should not be marked in non-technical texts because the meaning of words, in most cases, is discernible from sentential and discourse context.^v
5. The approximant <w> should be used in Cinyanja/Chichewa dialects even in place of the voiced bilabial fricative often written as <w̄>, because the meaning of words, in most cases, is predictable the context. Moreover the two sounds may be used interchangeably.^{vi}
6. Aspiration should be marked by <h>.
7. Loanwords must be written as pronounced in Cinyanja/Chichewa.
8. Locatives should be written disjunctively with proper nouns, and conjunctively with common nouns. This is to highlight the distinctiveness of proper nouns.
9. Honorifics should be written disjunctively.
10. The first letter of a sentence and the first letter of a proper noun must be capitalised.
11. Genitives should be written disjunctively.
12. Conjunctions should be written separately.
13. There is no /r/ sound in Cinyanja/Chichewa therefore all liquids should be written as /l/.
14. The copula should be written as a separate word. Except in situations where it is contracted. For example the copula <ndi> when contracted to <-n-> should be joined to next word as in *ici ndi cinthu* → *ici n'cinthu* 'this is a thing'
15. Enclitics (e.g. *-be*, *-nso*, *-tu*, *-ko*, *-ni*, etc.) should be attached to the words they modify.

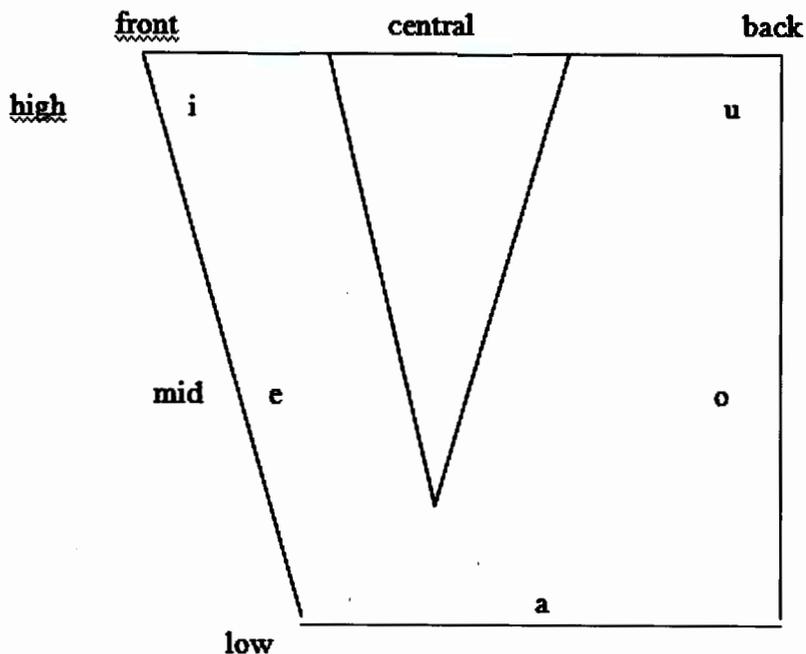
16. Interrogatives should be written as separate words, except where such forms are reduced, in which case they should be attached to the verb or any other expression.
17. Contracted particles should be attached to their host.
18. Verbal affixes such as tense markers, infinitive markers, subject markers, object markers, negative particles, etc. should be written conjunctively with the relevant verb stem.
19. Ideophones should be written as single words. If the ideophone is repeated, it should be represented as a repetition and not as a single word.

1. VOWELS

1.1 Short vowels (General rule no. 1)

The five short, contrastive vowels to be used are as follows: a, e, i, o, u, represented in the short vowel chart below.

Short vowels:



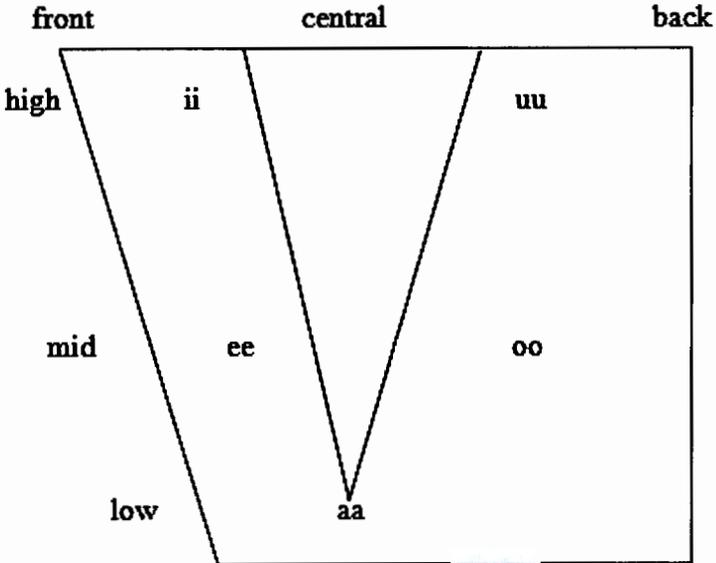
Examples:

- | | |
|-------|--------------|
| vala | 'dress up' |
| lela | 'look after' |
| lila | 'cry' |
| lodza | 'bewitch' |
| luma | 'bite' |

1.2 Long vowels (General rule no. 1)

Short and long vowels are contrastive. Writing the vowel twice will represent the long vowel, as shown below.

Long vowels:



Long vowel

Kaamba 'reason'
viika 'soak'
boola 'drill'
vuula 'take out of water'

Short vowel

kamba 'tortoise/say'
vika 'to thatch'
bola 'preferably'
vula 'undress'

Predictable long vowels such as penultimate vowels should be written as single vowels.

1.3 Tone (General rule no. 4)

Although tone has grammatical and functional implications in Cinyanja/Chichewa, it is not necessary to mark tone as the meaning of words is in most cases discernable from sentential and discourse context. The following examples illustrate this point:

1. Masiku ano mtengo wa nyama wakwela
'These days the price of meat has gone up'
2. Mlimi wagwetsa mtengo umene unali pamunda wake
'The farmer has cut down the tree which was in his field'

It is clear from context that in the first sentence 'mtengo' means 'price'. This is discernable from the meaning of the sentence. In the second sentence 'mtengo' means 'tree' also discernable from the meaning of the sentence.

2. CONSONANTS

2.1 Consonants (General rule no. 4)

The writing system of Cinyanja/Chichewa shall use letters rather than phonetic symbols. The following consonants will be used:

Phonetic symbol	Grapheme	Example
b	b*	bala 'wound'
	c	cimanga 'maize'
	ch	chula 'mention/name'
d	d**	dimba 'vegetable garden'
dz	dz	dzina 'name'
f	f	fanizo 'example'
g	g	galu 'dog'
h	h	haci 'horse'
j	j	jekete 'jacket'
k	k	kalulu 'hare'
kh	kh	khosi 'neck'
l	l	lilime 'tongue'
m	m	mavu 'wasps'
n	n	namondwe 'storm'
	ng'	ng'ombe 'cattle'
	ny	nyimbo 'song'
p	p	pansi 'down'
ph	ph	phala 'porridge'
ps	ps	psopsona 'kiss'
s	s	sowa 'disappear'
	sh	shati 'shirt'
t	t	tambala 'cock'
th	th	thamanga 'run'
ts	ts	tsamba 'leaf'
v	v	vina 'dance'
w	w	wawasa 'be sour'
y	y	yekha 'alone'
z	z	zolowela 'get used to'

*In Cinyanja/Chichewa the letter /b/ stands for the voiced bilabial implosive.

**In Cinyanja/Chichewa the symbol /d/ as in the orthography stands for both the voiced alveolar plosive and voiced alveolar implosive.

Glides can combine with almost all the above consonants to form complex consonants as seen in the examples below:

Combinations with -w-

kudwala	‘to be sick/ill’
kubwela	‘to come’
kuphwanya	‘to break’
kuthwa	‘to be sharp’
kukwiya	‘to be angry’

Combination with -y-

kudya	‘to eat’
kupyola	‘to go beyond’
kubyala	‘to plant’
kuthyola	‘to break’

2.2 Aspirated and Non-aspirated Consonants

Aspiration will be marked by the letter -h- as shown in the following examples:

With aspiration	Without aspiration		
phala	‘porridge’	pala	‘scrap’
thumba	‘pocket’	tumba	‘discover’
kucha	‘to set trap’	kuca	‘to dawn’
khala	‘sit’	kala	‘scratch’

All cases where aspiration was previously written as /tch/ this shall be written as /ch/ because the /t/ in the combination of /tch/ is not necessary as in the following examples:

tchalitchi	→	chalichi	‘church’
tchela	→	chela	‘to trip’
ntchito	→	nchito	‘work’
ntchowa	→	nchowa	‘a female infant’
ntchuwa	→	nchuwa	‘traditional draft game’

The combination of /ch/ which does not involve aspiration shall be written as /c/ as in the following examples:

chala	→	cala	'finger'
ceza	→	ceza	'chat'
Chichewa	→	Cicewa	'the name of language'
chola	→	cola	'bag'
chulu	→	culu	'anthill'

2.3 Nasals, Nasalised and Prenasalised Consonants

The velar nasal sound /ŋ/ will be represented as -ng'- as in the following examples:

ng'amba	'tear'
ng'ombe	'cattle'
ng'oma	'drum'
ng'ala	'eye disease'
ng'ung'dza	'to hum'

The palatal nasal /ɲ/ should be written as -ny- as in the following examples:

nyama	'meat'
nyelele	'an ant'
nyimbo	'song'
nyoza	'to despise'
nyumba	'house'

2.4 Approximants

The approximant <w> will be used in all cases involving the rounded labial velar glide /w/ and the voiced bilabial fricative previously written as <w̃>. This is because the distinction between the two has no phonemic significance Cinyanja/Chichewa. This is illustrated in the following:

Malawi	→	'name of a country'
kuwala	→	'to shine'
kulowa	→	'to enter'
kulawa	→	'to taste'
wana	→	'children'

2.5 Liquids

Cinyanja/Cicewa has /l/ and not phonemic /r/. Hence the letter /l/ shall be used in all contexts involving liquids as in the following examples:

lero	becomes	lelo	'today'
mpira	becomes	mpila	'ball'
pemphera ^{vii}	becomes	pemphela	'pray'
phiri	becomes	phili	'mountain'
lira	becomes	lila	'cry'
pilira	becomes	pilila	'persevere'

3. WORD DIVISION

3.1 Conjunctives

Conjunctive element *ndi* which means 'and' should not be attached to any word, but should be written as a separate word.

bambo ndi mayi	'father and mother'
mwana anadya ndi kugona	'the child ate And slept'

3.2 The Copula

The copula verb *ndi* which means 'it is' or 'they are' should be written separate from the words that are following as in the example below:

Uyu ndi mkazi wanga	'this is my wife'
A Kandodo ndi mphutsi	Mr. Kandodo is a teacher'

Other copulative forms *-li*, and *-khala* should also be written as separate words as shown below.

Uyu anali mkazi wanga	'this (one) was my wife'
Uyu adzakhala mkazi wanga	'this (one) will be my wife'

When *ndi* functions as a subject agreement marker, it should be written conjunctively with the verb. Consider the following contrast between the copular and the subject agreement marker in the examples below; *ndi* as a copular:

Uyu ndi mulonda	'he is a watchman'
------------------------	--------------------

ndi as a subject agreement marker:

Ine ndimulonda uyu

'I'll watch over him/her'

3.3 Honorifics

Honorifics should be written disjunctively. Examples of honorific markers are:

A Mwale 'Mr. Mwale'

A Banda 'Mr. Banda'

If an honorific comes at the beginning of a sentence, its initial letter should be capitalised as indicated below:

A Mwale sanapite ku Lilongwe 'Mr. Mwale hasn't gone/ didn't go to Lilongwe'

Compare the above sentence with the following sentence where the honorific is in the middle of the sentence and is not capitalized

A Kamwendo **ndi** a Mwale sanapite ku Lilongwe

'Mr. Kamwendo and Mr. Mwle have not gone to Lilongwe'

3.4 Locatives

Locative prefixes should be attached to the common nouns they modify, but not to proper nouns.

Locative prefixes used with common nouns

padenga	'on the roof'
kumtsinje	'to the river'
munyumba	'in the house'
kumapeto	'at the end'

Locative prefixes used with proper nouns

pa Lilongwe	'at Lilongwe'
ku Chipata	'to Chipata'
mu Zomba	'in Zomba'

Locative prefixes should not be attached to days of the week. Consider the following examples:

pa Ciwelu	'on Saturday'
pa Citatu	'on Wednesday'
pa Cinayi	'on Thursdays'

3.5 Negative Particles

The negative particle *si-* meaning 'not' is morpho-phonologically integral to the verbs it modifies. As such, it should be treated as part of the verb, and thus should be joined to it as shown below:

sitifuna	'we don't want'
sindinafike	'I did not arrive'
simunabwele	'you did not come'

For the same reason when a negative particle negates a noun it should be joined to it. This is illustrated below:

siJoni ' (it's) not John'

However polysyllabic prefixes of negation should be written separately such as in the following:

osati John 'not John'

3.6 Enclitics

Enclitics as suffixes that should be attached to the words they modify. For example:

amalume ananditandizako	'my uncle helped me a little bit'
pano takhalapo	'we have been here for a long time'
nyumbayi	'this house'
munthuyu	'this person'
tamwanso	'we have drunk again'
tamwadi	'we have really drunk'

3.7 Associatives and Possessives

Associative morphemes should be written conjunctively. However, possessives should be written disjunctively unless they precede a personal pronoun.

Associatives

galu wakuda	'black dog'
mwana wofatsa	'a humble/quiet child'
mwana wanzelu	'clever child'

Possessives

galu wa Mabvuto	'Mabvuto's dog'
nkhope ya mkazi	'the woman's face'
katundu wa bamboo	'father's property'
ng'ombe za agogo	'grandparent's cattle'

3.8 Demonstratives

Demonstratives should be written disjunctively except when they are contracted in which case they should be attached to the host.

Full demonstratives

nyumba iyo	'that house'
mnyumba umu	'in this house'
Joni uyo	'that John'

A Miti awa 'this Mr. Miti'

Contracted demonstratives

Nyumbayo 'that house'

mnyumbamu 'in this house'

Joniyo 'that John'

A Mitiwa 'this is Mr. Miti'

4. PREDICATES

Verbal forms will be written conjunctively with all their morphological affixes both in their negative and positive forms. For example:

adzafika 'he'll arrive'

sitidzafika 'we won't arrive'

sanafike 'he didn't arrive'

sindidzidzangowelenga 'I will not just be reading'

5. REDUPLICATION AND COMPOUND NOUNS

5.1 Reduplication

Reduplicated forms should be written as one word because they represent single lexical items.^{viii} Therefore, a reduplicated word should be written as one word, without space or a hyphen in between as in the following examples:

pang'onopang'ono 'slowly'

pafupipafupi 'regularly'

kuyendayenda 'to walk about'

5.2 Compounds

Compounds should be written conjunctively, as in the following examples:

mpalamatabwa 'carpenter'

mtolankhani 'reporter'

cilumphilabele 'type of worm'

ciphadzuwa 'beauty queen'

mwanabele 'swelling of the lymph node'

6. IDEOPHONES

Ideophones are perceived as one word and should therefore be written as one word rather than as separate words. For example:

nyama zinali **yakaliyakali** mnkhalango
'animals were roaming all over the forest'

anthu anali **balalabalala** pa mbwalo
'the people were scattered all over the ground'

In writing, ideophones when repeated should not exceed three repetitions.

mvula inayamba tho! tho! tho! Kenaka puuu
'It started drizzling, and then it became a hailstorm'

7. INTERJECTIONS

Interjections, on the other hand, should be written disjunctively with an exclamation mark as in:

aaa!	'exclamation of surprise'
kotooo!	'exclamation for pain'
mayooo!	'exclamation for pain'
ehedeee!	'exclamation of joy'

8. BORROWED WORDS AND ESTABLISHED NAMES

Loan words will be written as pronounced in the local languages^{ix}. For example:

bukhu	'book'
disiketi	'diskette'
fakisi	'fax'
nambala	'number'
kompyuta	'computer'
kiyibodi	'keyboard'
jekeseni	'injection'
dokotala	'doctor'
shuga	'sugar'

9. NAMES OF PLACES, LANGUAGES, PEOPLE AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Names of places, languages, people and geographical features shall be written as are currently spelt. For example:

Chipata
Katete

Blantyre
Cinyanja/Chichewa^x
Cinsenga
England
London
Shire
Phiri
Beira
Mozambique
Quelimane
Macalane

10. SAMPLE TEXT/PASSAGE

Kukhazikitsidwa kwa Bungwe Lopeleka Cipepeso kwa anthu amene ananzunzika cifukwa ca ndale kunadzetsa ciyembekezo kwa anthu ambili amene ali ndi madandaulo kuti adzathandizidwa ndi kulandila cipepeso, kutanthauza kuti poika padela ndalama zopepesela anthuwa pazinthu zimene zinaonongeka, Bungweli likuyenela kupeza ndalama mofulumila zoti zipelekedwe kwa wodandaula amene wangovulazidwa kapena wanzunzika, kuti akhalenso cimodzimodzi ngati momwe akanakhala akanakhala kuti sanacitidwe colakwa cimene tsopano akulandilila cipepeso.

Malamulo ndi akuti Bungweli linapatsidwa mphamvu zolandila madandaulo amene akukhudzana ndi milandu yokhudza Boma la Malawi Congress Party (MCP) mpaka 17 May 1994. Mphamvuzi zikupyola dongosolo limenelimacitika kubwalo la milandu pofufuza ndi kuunika dandaulo. Bungweli lili ndi mphamvu zonse zofufuzila zothandiza kupeza zoona zenizeni za dandaulo lililonse.

English Translation

The establishment of the National Compensational Tribunal gave hope to those people who had been victimised by the oppressive political system. To fulfill this goal, the Tribunal has to secure funds very promptly so that victims can be compensated without delay. The prompt release of the compensation will enable victims to lead a life they could have led had they not been victimised.

The law stipulates that the Tribunal has the mandate to receive complaints of political harassment or human rights abuses which were perpetrated by the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) regime up to 17 May, 1994. This mandate goes

beyond what the courts do. The Tribunal has the full mandate to investigate the truth about any complaint lodged before it.

Recommendations

At the end of the workshops participants recommended that:

The harmonised and standardized rules established be put into practice, disseminated at national and international levels, and their adoption advocated for.

All the governments concerned take the necessary steps in conformity with the recommendations of the workshops.

The civil societies, artists, the media and all the users of the languages apply from now on the official norms relative to the writing systems of the languages.

ACALAN transmit the recommendations of the workshops to the highest authorities as soon as possible, disseminate the conclusions, ensure the continuation of the research work related to the elaboration of orthographic dictionaries and pedagogical grammars in the languages in conformity with the propositions of the Plans of Action of the Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions.

ACALAN, UNESCO, O.I.F. and all the other partners involved pursue the efforts of harmonising the orthographic rules of the languages.

Prizes of excellence in the languages be organized;

The harmonized orthographic rules be published.

END NOTES

i The Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions and the National Language Structures of the Member States of the African Union are the two working structures of ACALAN according to its Statutes.

ii Modern Standard Arabic and Berber for North Africa could not be established, because the socio-political atmosphere has not been conducive for the exercise.

iii The difference between harmonisation and standardisation might be subtle but it is important. Harmonisation is about consistency, while standardisation is about conformity. Therefore when you harmonise a language you focus more on the common goals and outcomes, while standardisation could be seen as focusing more on uniformity.

iv Normally vowels in penultimate positions and before nasals are predictably long. Such vowels should be written as single vowels.

v However, tone should be marked in technical texts such as dictionaries, grammar books and other texts dealing with language pedagogy. Even here it is important that *only the least frequent tones* be marked. Syllabic nasals that carry tone need to be marked (in the same way as vowels) if the relevant tone needs to be marked in the language. The tones to be marked may vary from language to language.

vi The distinction between the two has no phonemic significance in these dialects [see also S.R. Simango. 2001. On the use of the character \hat{w} in the ciNyanja/ciCewa orthography. In F. Banda (ed.)].

vii It is not clear how the rules for the use of \underline{l} and \underline{r} were arrived at in ciNyanja/ciCewa dialects. What is clear is that native speakers do not have \underline{r} in their speech. [For detailed discussion, see Banda (ed.), 2001]

viii There are basically two types of reduplication: stem reduplication and whole word reduplication. Native speakers perceive such reduplicated forms as a single lexical item, rather than one constituted by different parts. Hence, the argument for them to be written as one word. If such reduplication is conceived of as a repetition, then separate words need to be written (to represent the repetition).

ix However, indigenous words should be preferred where they are available.

x We are mindful that in Malawi the language is spelt Chinyanja/Chichewa. However, in Mozambique and Zambia, the preferred spelling is ciNyanja/ciCewa. We have opted for the latter for the sake of harmonization, as well as the fact that native speakers do not pronounce the names with aspiration as the [h] in the Malawi version suggests. [For detailed discussion, see Banda (ed.), 2001]

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Cinyanja / Chichewa, Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan
Vehicular Cross-Border Languages**

SAMPLE

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