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ABSTRACT

This textbook presents the essential structural features of Djerma as it is currently spoken in the western region of Niger. The course is organized into 30 units which constitute instructional material for from 300 to 400 hours of classroom instruction. It is specifically designed for intensive training programs of approximately 4 to 5 hours per day, or 30 hours per week, extending over a period of 10 to 12 weeks. Thirty tape recordings, containing the dialogues and drills of the 30 units, were developed to accompany the text. These should be used regularly by the student in a language laboratory or with a tape recorder for reinforcement of what has been learned in the classroom. In the ideal learning situation, the student will have access to: (1) a native speaker of Djerma who will act as a teacher and as a model of his language whom the student will imitate in intensive drill sessions; and (2) a linguistic scientist who will answer questions about the structure of the language. The course is, however, to a large degree self-instructional, and the student who lacks the opportunity for formal classroom instruction can make considerable progress by diligent use of text and tapes. (Author/CLK)

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PREFACE

Djerma Basic Course was prepared in the field by Paul V. Cooper, linguist, and Oliver Rice, writer and editor. The structural analysis was aided by reference to Practical Method for the Study of the Zerma Language, Revised Edition, 1965, developed by the Mission Chrétienne d'Afrique, Niamey, Niger. Extensive interviews were conducted with Moussa Seini, the principal informant, and with the following native speakers: Marcel Alimatou, Birama Keita, Terese Keita, and Souna Mahamane. The voices heard on the tapes are those of Moussa Durafey, Kadijito Keita, Terese Keita, Souna Mahamane, and Moussa Seini. The recordings were made in the studios of Radio Niger, Niamey.

INTRODUCTION

For Instructor and Students

Course Description

Djerma Basic Course presents the essential structural features of Djerma as it is currently spoken in the western region of Niger. The course is organized into 30 units which constitute instructional material for from 300 to 400 hours of classroom instruction. It is specifically designed for intensive training programs of approximately 4 to 5 hours per day, or 30 hours per week, extending over a period of 10 to 12 weeks.

Accompanying Djerma Basic Course are 30 tape recordings containing the dialogues and drills of the 30 units. These should be used regularly by the student in a language laboratory or with a tape recorder for reinforcement of what has been learned in the classroom.

In the ideal learning situation, the student will have access to (1) a native speaker of Djerma who will act as a teacher and, as a model of his language whom the student will imitate in intensive drill sessions; and (2) a linguistic scientist who will answer questions about the structure of the language. The course is, however, to a large degree self-instructional, and the student who lacks the opportunity for formal classroom instruction can make considerable progress by diligent use of text and tapes.

Methodology

Units 1-20 contain Dialogues, Structural Drills, and Phonology Drills. Units 21-30 contain Dialogues and Structural Drills only. Where appropriate, there are notes on the Dialogues, Structural Drills, and Phonology Drills.

In accordance with the principle that language learning is over-learning, each unit contains exhaustive drills based on the utterances of the dialogues. The student is thus provided with material through which he can internalize Djerma structures by manipulating them in their variety of forms and combinations, thus gradually acquiring the habits of automatic response and control necessary for fluency in the language.

General Comments

Use normal conversational speed. Do not speak more slowly than your instructor, and do not ask him to slow down his normal speech tempo. With repeated, careful listening, facility in comprehension will increase. This is the best preparation for understanding the rapid stream of speech produced by native speakers.

Use Djerma almost exclusively in the classroom. At least 80% of classroom time should be spent hearing and speaking the target language. Talk about the language should be kept to a minimum.

Master the material as you go. Review frequently. Progress will be

most rapid if the material of each unit is thoroughly learned before going on to the next.

Usage is the criterion for what is acceptable in language. Native speakers of a language often differ as to what is acceptable, depending on their dialects. If your instructor pronounces certain words in a manner different from that indicated in the text or on the tape, imitate your instructor but be aware of existing differences.

Procedures

Dialogues

Most of the units begin with a series of dialogues which contain the basic material of the unit. These dialogues should be thoroughly memorized. To this end, imitate your instructor and/or work carefully with the tapes.

Dialogues are given with either their English literal or contextual equivalents. The letters "A" and "B" appearing to the left of each complete utterance represent different speakers. New words or phrases are listed separately just above the complete utterances.

It is suggested that the instructor begin a new unit by reading aloud the complete utterances of the first dialogue at least three times. Next, he should read aloud the entire dialogue, including new vocabulary, at least twice. During this time, students' books should be closed. Students should hear each utterance before seeing it. Then the instructor

should model each utterance in turn and have the entire class repeat the utterance chorally at least three times.

When the instructor is satisfied that the choral repetition is reasonably accurate in pronunciation, intonation, and stress, and that the speed is adequate, he should drill each student individually on the same utterance as many times as necessary to produce satisfactory performance. If the instructor finds that a student has considerable difficulty with any portion of an utterance, even after several attempts, he should go on to the next student and return at another time to the student who is having difficulty.

When the entire class has gone through all the dialogues of the unit chorally and individually, with books closed, the students should open their books and listen to the instructor read the complete dialogues again, comparing their aural impressions with the printed page and noting the English equivalents. The instructor should then read each utterance and have the students read after him at least twice.

At this point two students should participate in the dialogue, taking parts A and B respectively and practising it until it is virtually memorized. This procedure should continue around the class until each student has played both roles.

If questions arise at this point concerning why the Djerma utterance is as it is, the instructor should not allow himself to be diverted from his primary task of serving as the best model of the language and as drill master. He should not attempt a discussion of the language's

history but should merely state that this is the way the Djerma express themselves. The linguistic scientist and/or the notes on the dialogues will answer essential questions concerning the structural items presented.

Phonology Drills

Phonology Drills provide drills on the important phonological features of Djerma. They may be used by the instructor in the classroom in guided imitation drill sessions similar to those employed for the dialogues. Alternately, the instructor may choose only those items drilling sounds which have proved difficult for his students. The Phonology Drills of Units 1-4 are essentially syllable drills and are built up in reverse order to preserve the normal intonation features of the sentence.

Structural Drills

Structural Drills provide exhaustive practice in the structures found in the dialogues. There are substitution drills, response drills, and expansion drills. Each item should be thoroughly drilled until the students can say the drills automatically and understand the meaning of each one. Mastery of the drills means that the student can understand and produce the drill items fluently and automatically with his book closed.

Substitution Drills. The instructor reads aloud the first or model utterance of a drill, invites student repetition, reads the next utter-

ance, which contains the substitution item, again invites student repetition, continuing in this manner through the entire drill so that each student is able to repeat each drill item at least twice.

At this point the instructor again gives the first or model utterance. He then gives only the cue item (underlined substitution item) of the next utterance and calls on a student to give the complete utterance. Similarly, the instructor provides each of the following cue items in turn and designates other students to respond. An example of single-item substitution follows.

Instructor: Wodin ga ti ay wone. . . . iri . . .

Student: Wodin ga ti iri wone.

Instructor: . . . a . . .

Student: Wodin ga ti a wone.

Instructor: . . . i . . .

Student: Wodin ga ti i wone.

Instructor: . . . ay . . .

Student: Wodin ga ti ay wone.

Following is an example of double-item substitution.

Instructor: Ni zen da'ga ay? . . . aran . . . i'ga . . .

Student: Aran zen da'ga i'ga?

Instructor: . . . a . . . iri . . .

Student: A zen da'ga iri?

Instructor: . . . iri . . . i'gey . . .

Student: Iri zen da'ga i'gey?

Instructor: . . . ni . . . ay . . .

Student: Ni zen da'ga ay?

Response Drills. The instructor works through a response drill with the students for familiarization as with the Substitution Drills. Then he again gives the first utterance and designates a student to provide the appropriate response. An example follows.

Instructor: I fo se no alborey go ga goy tyere banda?

Student: I ga hima ga tyere ga.

Instructor: I fo se no alborey'go ga goy tyere banda?

Student: I ga dona ga tyere ga.

Instructor: I fo se no alborey go ga goy tyere banda?

Student: I ga goy ga tyere ga.

As a variation, two or more students can conduct a response drill among themselves, then designate other students to conduct the next one. As a further variation, and to check mastery of the material, the instructor may give a response and designate a student to give the utterance that triggered it.

Expansion Drills. The instructor works through an expansion drill with the students for familiarization as with the Substitution and Response Drills. Then he again gives the first utterance followed by each expansion cue in turn and designates students to give the expanded sentences. An example follows.

Instructor: Kolkoti no iri ga duma. . . . damsi . . .

Student: Damsi nda kolkoti no iri ga duma.

Instructor: . . . hayni . . .

Student: Hayni nda damsi nda kolkoti no iri ga duma.

Instructor: Now give the original unexpanded utterance.

Student: Kolkoti no iri ga duma.

Phonology and Orthography

There are several orthographic systems currently in use for the representation of Djerma sounds. Since very little written material exists, and since most of that is being produced by the Service de l'Alphabetisation et de l'Education des Adultes of the Niger Ministry of Education, it has seemed advisable to adopt a modified form of the system used by the Service. The only difference is that, where the Service uses the circumflex accent over vowels and n to represent nasalization and velarization, we have used an apostrophe following the letter in question. Since elision of vowels has not been indicated in the text in order not to obscure the unelided forms of elided words, no confusion should result from the use of the apostrophe in place of the circumflex accent. The orthography employed represents the sounds of Djerma quite consistently, there being almost always a one-for-one correspondence between sound and symbol.

Stress. Many Djerma utterances contain a succession of monosyllables more or less evenly stressed. In most two-syllable words, stress is on the first syllable. The last syllable of some two-syllable words,

however, appears to receive as much stress as the first syllable, if not more. In three- and four-syllable words, primary stress is on the first syllable with a secondary stress on the third syllable.

Tone. The function of tone in Djerma is a subject in need of more study. Djerma words exist having two or more different meanings, which appear to be distinguished, in isolation, only by a difference in tone. However, when these same words are uttered within the context of a sentence, the tonal distinction is blurred, and it is often difficult to detect the difference in tone heard previously when the word was uttered in isolation. Tonal distinctions must be learned as they occur. In general, the context is the best guide for understanding the meaning of individual words.

Vowel and Consonant Length. Vowel length and consonant length are in many cases phonemic, i. e., there is a difference in meaning between a word uttered with a short vowel and the same word uttered with a long vowel; likewise, between a word uttered with a single consonant and the same word uttered with a double consonant. For such contrasts, see the note to the Phonology Drills of Unit 12, p. 106.

Tonal and length contrasts are presented in the Phonology Drills of Units 12-20.

Vowels (Oral)

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>
i	High front unrounded, unglided; resembles sound of <u>i</u> in "machine."	<u>i</u> 'they'
e	Lower-mid front, lax; resembles sound of <u>e</u> in "let."	<u>ne</u> 'here'
a	Low central unrounded; resembles sound of <u>a</u> in "father."	<u>a</u> 'he/she'
o	Lower-mid back rounded, lax; resembles sound of <u>o</u> in "roll."	<u>fo</u> 'which'
u	High back rounded, unglided; resembles sound of <u>u</u> in "ute."	<u>fu</u> 'house'

Vowels (Nasal)

i'	High front unrounded, unglided, nasal; resembles sound of <u>i</u> in "ink."	<u>i'ga</u> 'he/she' (emphatic)
e'	Lower-mid front, lax, nasal; resembles sound of French <u>in</u> in "vin."	<u>de'di</u> 'fire'
a'	Low central unrounded, nasal; resembles sound of French <u>an</u> in "quand."	<u>ya'</u> (plural marker)
o'	Lower-mid back rounded, lax, nasal; resembles sound of French <u>on</u> in "bon."	<u>bo'</u> 'on'
u'	High back rounded, unglided, nasal; resembles sound of French <u>ou</u> in "poumon."	<u>hu'kuna</u> 'today'

Consonants

p	Voiceless bilabial stop; like sound of <u>p</u> in "spin."	<u>po'piter</u> 'potato'
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<u>Letter</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>
b	Voiced bilabial stop; like sound of <u>b</u> in "book."	<u>ban</u> 'to finish'
t	Voiceless dental stop; like sound of French <u>t</u> in "tu."	<u>to</u> 'to arrive'
d	Voiced dental stop; like sound of French <u>d</u> in "dire."	<u>di</u> 'to see'
ty	Voiceless palatal stop; no exact equivalent; sound varies in pronunciation between the <u>ty</u> of "don't ya" and the <u>ky</u> sound in "cute."	<u>tyi'di</u> 'plus'
dy	Voiced palatal stop; no exact equivalent; sound varies in pronunciation between the <u>dy</u> of "d'ya hear" and the <u>gy</u> of "I dig ya."	<u>dyiri</u> 'year'
k	Voiceless velar stop; like sound of <u>k</u> in "skiing."	<u>ka</u> 'to come'
g	Voiced velar stop; like sound of <u>g</u> in "gas."	<u>goro</u> 'to sit'
m	Voiced bilabial nasal; like sound of <u>m</u> in "mama."	<u>mo</u> 'also'
n	Voiced alveolar nasal; like sound of <u>n</u> in "no."	<u>ne</u> 'here'
ny	Palatal nasal; like sound of <u>ny</u> in "canyon."	<u>nya</u> 'mother'
n'	Dorso-velar nasal resonant; like sound of <u>ng</u> in "sing," but, unlike English, sometimes occurs initially.	<u>n'wa</u> 'to eat'

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>
l	Voiced alveolar lateral; like sound of <u>l</u> in "lose."	<u>lamba</u> 'number'
r	Voiced apico-alveolar flap; like sound of <u>r</u> in standard British pronunciation of "very."	<u>ra</u> 'in'
f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative; like sound of <u>f</u> in "fire."	<u>fo</u> 'greeting'
s	Alveolar grooved voiceless fricative; like sound of <u>s</u> in "see."	<u>safun</u> 'soap'
z	Alveolar grooved voiced fricative; like sound of <u>z</u> in "zebra."	<u>zen</u> 'old'
h	Glottal fricative; like sound of <u>h</u> in "has."	<u>ha</u> ' 'to drink'

Glides

w	Labio-velar; like sound of <u>w</u> in "wash."	<u>woy</u> 'ten'
y	Palatal; like sound of <u>y</u> in "yes."	<u>ye</u> 'to return'

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page		Page
PREFACE	ii	Phonology Drills	13
INTRODUCTION	iii	Structural Drills	16
UNIT 1	1	UNIT 3	21
Dialogue 1	1	Dialogue 1	21
Dialogue 2	1	Dialogue 2	21
Dialogue 3	1	Dialogue 3	21
Dialogue 4	1	Dialogue 4	22
Dialogue 5	2	Notes on the Dialogues	22
Dialogue 6	2	Phonology Drills	22
Dialogue 7	2	Structural Drills	24
Dialogue 8	2	UNIT 4	30
Dialogue 9	2	Dialogue 1	30
Dialogue 10	3	Dialogue 2	30
Dialogue 11	3	Notes on the Dialogues	31
Dialogue 12	3	Phonology Drills	31
Dialogue 13	3	Structural Drills	33
Dialogue 14	4	UNIT 5	40
Dialogue 15	4	Dialogue 1	40
Dialogue 16	5	Dialogue 2	40
Notes on the Dialogues	5	Dialogue 3	40
Phonology Drills	6	Dialogue 4	41
Structural Drills	7	Notes on the Dialogues	41
UNIT 2	11	Structural Drills	41
Dialogue 1	11	Phonology Drills	47
Dialogue 2	11	UNIT 6	48
Dialogue 3	11	Dialogue 1	48
Dialogue 4	12	Dialogue 2	48
Dialogue 5	12	Dialogue 3	49
Dialogue 6	12	Dialogue 4	49
Notes on the Dialogues	13	Note on the Dialogues	49

	Page		Page
Structural Drills	50	Dialogue 2	80
Phonology Drills	55	Dialogue 3	81
UNIT 7	56	Dialogue 4	81
Dialogue 1	56	Note on the Dialogues	81
Dialogue 2	56	Structural Drills	81
Dialogue 3	56	Phonology Drills	86
Dialogue 4	56	UNIT 11	87
Dialogue 5	56	Dialogue 1	87
Dialogue 6	57	Dialogue 2	87
Dialogue 7	57	Dialogue 3	88
Dialogue 8	57	Dialogue 4	88
Notes on the Dialogues	58	Dialogue 5	88
Structural Drills	58	Dialogue 6	89
Phonology Drills	64	Dialogue 7	89
UNIT 8	65	Dialogue 8	89
Dialogue 1	65	Dialogue 9	89
Dialogue 2	65	Notes on the Dialogues	90
Dialogue 3	65	Structural Drills	90
Dialogue 4	66	Phonology Drills	96
Structural Drills	66	UNIT 12	97
Phonology Drills	71	Dialogue 1	97
UNIT 9	72	Dialogue 2	97
Dialogue 1	72	Dialogue 3	97
Dialogue 2	72	Dialogue 4	98
Dialogue 3	72	Structural Drills	98
Dialogue 4	73	Phonology Drills	104
Dialogue 5	73	Note on the Phonology	
Dialogue 6	73	Drills	106
Note on the Dialogues	74	UNIT 13	107
Structural Drills	74	Dialogue 1	107
Phonology Drills	79	Dialogue 2	107
UNIT 10	80	Dialogue 3	108
Dialogue 1	80	Dialogue 4	108

	Page		Page
Dialogue 5	109	Phonology Drills	151
Dialogue 6	109	UNIT 18	153
Notes on the Dialogues	109	Dialogue 1	153
Structural Drills	109	Dialogue 2	154
Phonology Drills	111	Dialogue 3	154
UNIT 14	117	Dialogue 4	154
Dialogue 1	117	Structural Drills	154
Dialogue 2	117	Phonology Drills	158
Dialogue 3	118	UNIT 19	160
Dialogue 4	118	Dialogue 1	160
Dialogue 5	119	Dialogue 2	160
Dialogue 6	119	Dialogue 3	161
Dialogue 7	119	Dialogue 4	161
Note on the Dialogues	119	Notes on the Dialogues	161
Structural Drills	120	Structural Drills	161
Note on the Structural		Phonology Drills	169
Drills	123	UNIT 20	171
Phonology Drills	123	Dialogue 1	171
UNIT 15	125	Dialogue 2	171
Structural Drills	125	Dialogue 3	171
Note on the Structural		Dialogue 4	171
Drills	134	Dialogue 5	172
Phonology Drills	134	Dialogue 6	172
UNIT 16	136	Dialogue 7	172
Dialogue 1	136	Dialogue 8	172
Dialogue 2	136	Dialogue 9	173
Dialogue 3	137	Dialogue 10	173
Dialogue 4	137	Dialogue 11	173
Dialogue 5	137	Dialogue 12	173
Notes on the Dialogues	138	Structural Drills	174
Structural Drills	138	Phonology Drills	179
Phonology Drills	142	UNIT 21	181
UNIT 17	144	Dialogue 1	181
Structural Drills	144	Dialogue 2	181

	Page		Page
Dialogue 3	182	Dialogue 3	217
Dialogue 4	182	Dialogue 4	217
Structural Drills	183	Notes on the Dialogues	218
UNIT 22	187	Structural Drills	218
Dialogue 1	187	UNIT 27	223
Dialogue 2	187	Dialogue 1	223
Dialogue 3	188	Dialogue 2	223
Dialogue 4	188	Dialogue 3	224
Dialogue 5	188	Dialogue 4	224
Dialogue 6	188	Dialogue 5	224
Note on the Dialogues	189	Note on the Dialogues	225
Structural Drills	189	Structural Drills	225
UNIT 23	194	UNIT 28	231
Dialogue 1	194	Dialogue 1	231
Dialogue 2	194	Dialogue 2	231
Dialogue 3	195	Structural Drills	232
Dialogue 4	196	UNIT 29	238
Notes on the Dialogues	196	Dialogue 1	238
Structural Drills	199	Dialogue 2	238
UNIT 24	203	Dialogue 3	239
Structural Drills	203	Dialogue 4	239
UNIT 25	208	Dialogue 5	239
Dialogue 1	208	Dialogue 6	239
Dialogue 2	208	Note on the Dialogues	240
Dialogue 3	208	Structural Drills	240
Dialogue 4	208	UNIT 30	249
Dialogue 5	209	Dialogue 1	249
Dialogue 6	209	Dialogue 2	250
Dialogue 7	210	Note on the Dialogues	250
Structural Drills	210	Structural Drills	250
UNIT 26	216	DJERMA-ENGLISH-FRENCH GLOSSARY	260
Dialogue 1	216	ENGLISH-DJERMA-FRENCH GLOSSARY	273
Dialogue 2	216	FRENCH-DJERMA-ENGLISH GLOSSARY	

UNIT 1
Dialogue 1

fofo
A: Fofof.

hello
A: Hello.

ngwoya
B: Ngwoya.

hello
B: Hello.

Dialogue 2

ni
kani
bani
A: Ni kani¹ bani?²

you (sg. subject)
to lie down
health

A: How are you?

samey
B: Bani samey.

good

B: Very well.

Dialogue 3

A: Ni kani bani?

A: How are you?

B: Bani samey. Ni kani bani?

B: Very well. How are you?

A: Bani samey.

A: Very well.

Dialogue 4

aran
A: Aran kani bani?

you (pl. subject)

A: How are you?

B: Bani samey.

B: Very well.