INTRODUCTION

The language called Fulfulde by its original speakers, the Fulbe people, is now spoken by millions of West Africans - from the Gambia to Cameroun. The Fulbe are traditionally nomad cattle-owners whose way of life is inextricably tied to their livestock. In some regions, however, the Fulbe have turned to a more settled existence as farmers and as Muslim scholars. From this latter group sprang, during the nineteenth century, several reform movements which culminated in the establishment of kingdoms ruled by Fulbe emirs. Thus, economically and politically, Fulfulde speakers have greatly influenced much of West Africa's development.

Spread over a wide geographical area, the Fulfulde language has diverged, through time, into a number of mutually intelligible dialects. This book is concerned with the dialect that is spoken in Adamawa (Gonga State of Nigeria) and in border regions of the Republic of Cameroun. In this border area, Fulfulde is used as a second language, especially for trade. For this reason, among others, the Adamawa dialect is different from the Fulfulde which is spoken further west whence the ancestors of the Adamawa Fulbe came. Fortunately for the student, its use as a lingua franca has resulted in some simplification of the grammar.

While primarily concerned with teaching the student to speak the Fulfulde language, our choices of vocabulary and dialogue have been largely determined by considerations of introducing some Fulbe cultural information. The inclusion of illustrations in the text has also been prompted by this consideration. To be told that tummude means calabash is one thing; to see an illustration of a calabash in use (i.e. in some kind of cultural context) is, we feel, a far more effective way of language teaching.

This book is intended as a teach-yourself aid for those who are not necessarily language specialists. It is not a grammar, and the amount of vocabulary is restricted to what a student can thoroughly master during the course. The student interested in a detailed grammar of Fulfulde is referred to Stennes (1967). The standard Fulfulde dictionary is Taylor (1931).

Since Adamawa Fulfulde: An Introductory Course is a competency based, self-teaching text, indispensable to its efficient use is a set of accompanying audio tapes available from the Laboratories for Recorded Instruction, UW-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

This competency based course requires the student to thoroughly master all of the material presented in a given lesson before proceeding to the following lesson. Since language learning is not an overnight process, and since it unavoidably involves some hard work, the following guidelines will be of use to the student.
Dialogues

It is important to memorize the dialogue or narrative for each lesson. The teacher on the tape will say it for you once at a normal pace, and then twice more, giving you time to repeat. Repeat the dialogue for as long as it takes to be able to recite smoothly and without hesitation, imitating the teacher's "normal pace" pronunciation. It is not advisable, however, to persist in this endeavor for more than twenty minutes without a break.

Vocabulary

Our aim has been to introduce only as much vocabulary as can be completely mastered during the course. A recommended practice for facilitating vocabulary acquisition is to make cards with the Fulfulde word on one side and the English equivalent on the other, and to review the cards often.

Drills

Again, mastery is the keynote. If necessary, use the textbook when you first attempt a drill, but work on a lesson until you can do all the drills with the book closed. And, as with dialogue mastery, it is not advisable to do drill practice for more than twenty minutes at a time. Once you are fairly comfortable with Fulfulde pronunciation, you may wish to review or practice a drill without using the tape. You may find it useful to cover the answer while keeping the cues visible, and, for some of the drills, to cover first one portion and then the other.

Jangde himmende - final reading

As with the drills, you may prefer to look at the textbook the first time through, but don't be satisfied until you can comfortably understand the jangde himmende with the book closed. Repeat the phrases after the teacher for additional fluency practice, and then read the entire jangde aloud on your own without relying on the tape.

Ngewta - conversation

The illustrations at the end of the lessons are designed to stimulate spontaneous comment from you in Fulfulde. Be sure to use as much vocabulary and as many grammatical constructions as possible both from the lesson you've just completed, and from previous lessons. Do not, however, attempt lengthy or complicated explanations. This will only prove frustrating and shift your concentration away from what you have mastered. If you continue to study Fulfulde in a deliberate, thorough manner, you will master complex speech in time. For the present, you are learning introductory material in a competency based course.

Although primarily designed for self-teaching, the course is well suited for a tutorial or classroom situation. The teacher is advised to heed the guidelines provided above; and, in addition, the following points will be useful.

Practice the dialogue until a lively and natural sounding exchange is achieved. Be sure to change roles so that the student gets practice with each one.

For long sentences, the technique of "backward build-up" is effective. Have the student repeat the last phrase until he or she knows it, and then the second to last phrase, then both together, and so on until the entire sentence has been learned.
For example, repeat each step as many times as necessary:

1) Teacher: ...haa wuro ma'b'be.
   Student repeats.

2) T  S  ...jangirde maw'be...

3) T  S  ...jangirde maw'be haa wuro ma'b'be.

4) T  S  O yi'di nastugo...

5) T  S  O yi'di nastugo jangirde maw'be haa wuro ma'b'be.

Although thorough mastery is the mainstay of the course, beware of carrying on
drill practice for longer than twenty minutes at a time. To be efficient, the student
needs a break from such concentrated effort; and this applies to classroom work as well
as to practice with the tapes.

Do, however, insist that the vocabulary and grammatical structures be accurately
reproduced. Don't settle for less than perfect in this regard, no matter how long it takes.
The object of the course is not to complete it in record time, but to master the Fulfulde
presented.

For the Ngewta section, a teacher can prompt the student by asking questions and
also encourage the student to ask questions in turn. Care must be taken during these
sessions, however, not to introduce items extraneous to the text. There may be a strong
temptation for the teacher to elaborate and for the student to take extensive notes in a
futile effort to retain too much too soon.

It is our sincere wish that your introduction to the study of Adamawa Fulfulde be
a stimulating and rewarding experience.

C.A.P.
A.N.S.

July, 1978
Madison, Wisconsin

English text appears in this typestyle.
Fulfulde text appears in this typestyle.
Translations appear in this typestyle.