





## **Testing the Intelligibility of Nigerian Fali to Cameroonian Fali, Bana and Gude Listeners**

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### **Abstract**

Using the word ‘Fali’ to identify a group of people and languages in northern Cameroon and Nigeria has caused significant challenges to the classification of the languages and the description of the link between those communities. This study aims at testing the intelligibility of Nigerian Fali to Cameroonian Fali (CamFali), Bana and Gude speakers in order to bring out the relationship between the languages. Participants to the study include 88 Cameroonian native and fluent speakers of the above listed languages, made up of 46 CamFali speakers from the Bossum, Kangu, Peske-Bori and Tinguelin communities, 35 Gude speakers from Gude dialect (Gude D), Djimi and Njanyi, and 7 Bana speakers. The informants were met either in-person or online (through WhatsApp), and they listened to 3 recordings from 3 dialects of Nigerian Fali, namely Vimtim, Bahuli and Muchalla which were obtained from Global Recordings Network to test the listeners’ recognition and comprehension of the languages. The findings indicated that the 3 languages are neither intelligible to CamFali nor to Bana listeners, but they are rather variants of Djimi which in turn is a dialect of Gude. The study also revealed that from the 3 dialects of Gude, Djimi is more related to Gude D than Njanyi. It was therefore concluded that Nigerian Fali is not related to CamFali and Bana, but it is rather Gude, which confirms that the word ‘Fali’ does not refer to specific people with common ancestral or linguistic background.

Keywords: Intelligibility, Nigerian Fali, Cameroonian Fali, Bana, Gude

### **Introduction**

In Africa, several communities are identified by names that have been attributed to them by others following either a friendly or a hostile contact. The name ‘Fali’ which is used to refer to some communities by the Fulani Muslim Jihadists lead by Usman Dan

Fodio in early 19<sup>th</sup> century is one of those cases as the word 'Fali' itself just means 'perched' in Fulfulde which is the language of the Fulani. One of the common features between the peoples that fall under this appellation is their geographical positions as they always settled on hills. The word might also have been used to describe the tactic used by some of the communities during the resistance war that they fought against the Jihadists.

The Fali communities are spread at the border between Cameroon and Nigeria. In North Cameroon, the Bveri ('VΛi) community in particular used poisoned arrows and spears to fight against the Fulani Jihadists in a war called 'Jamaari', and they generally get perched on hills, rocks or trees where the Fulani who mainly rode on horses can't reach them. Then the Fulani used to exclaim 'To fali, faltata!' (Once they are perched, you can't remove them). It is worth noting that the word also had some semantic extensions, as it was also used to mean 'Once they have their preconceived ideas, you can't change them'. In fact, after the Jihad, the Fulani started settling in the communities and seeking to build a normal relation with both the converted and the unconverted who always remained reluctant to a total integration with their then enemies. Then, during their exchange, the word 'Fali' was generally used to describe the state of the unconverted peoples' mind who always saw the Fulani as enemies.

### **Motivation**

Firstly, this research was motivated by the multiplicity of language families to which the Fali languages have been attributed: Adamawa-Ubangi (Greenberg, 1963), Atlantic-Congo, Chadic-Adamawa (Yakan, 1999; Blench, 2011; Newman, 2013), Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo, Adamawa Eastern (Hoskison, 1983). Secondly, there are unclear information about the ethnic groups involved in this investigation, because, according to Yakan (1999), Fali in Nigeria is referred to as Bana, while there is an ethnic group in the Far North of Cameroon that is also called Bana. Thirdly, Hoskison (1983) reported that the Gude language is closely related to Fali languages spoken in the North, but not Fali of Kiria, Mijilu or Fali of Gili, and not even Fali of Dourbeye. Finally, there are no linguistic investigations to establish the relationship between the Fali languages as they remain uncommented (Dieu & Renaud, 1983).

### **Literature Review**

#### **An Overview of the Four Linguistic Communities Cameroonian Fali**

CamFali belongs to the Adamawa language group, particularly to the Niger-Congo cluster (Greenberg, 1963), and occupies mainly two geographical areas in the North region of Cameroon. On the one hand, there is Fali North which includes Fali Bossum or Gbə'ssem

(code 372), Fali Peske-Bori or Bveri (code 373) and both communities are located in the Mayo-Louti division. On the other hand, there is Fali South which encompasses Fali Kangu or Kaang (code 374) and Fali Tinguelin or Man'go (code 375) and they live in the Benoué division (Dieu & Renaud, 1983). It is worth indicating that Fali Bossum is further divided into several varieties including Bossum (originally called *Gbə'ssem*), Kermbo (*Kirmva*), Raan, Buyum (*Vugnum*), Gnaam and Tchapka. As for Fali Peske- Bori, it includes the Peske (*Kpeske*) and the Bori or Bveri ('VΛɪ) dialects. It should be noted that the association of *Peske* and *Bori* is more based on political motivations than linguistic proximity, because Fali Bori is closer to Fali Bossum and all its dialects than to Fali Peske. Fali Tinguelin also encompasses Ndoudja, Ram, and Toro; while Fali Kangu is further divided into Pussane and Furu.

As for linguistic works, both Fali North and Fali South have not been studied and therefore do not have an established phonology, morphology, syntax or lexis (Dieu & Renaud, 1983, p. 411). Since then, the situation has not evolved for Fali North, while for Fali South, a study is in progress in the 'Centre de Littérature Fali' which is based in Pitoa as part of the bible translation project. Fali North and Fali South are to be considered as endangered languages because each generation dies with its linguistic competence as Carlin (1993) predicted, because the languages are being abandoned to the profit of Fulfulde which is a lingua franca, French and English which are official languages in the countries.

### **Nigerian Fali**

Nigerian Fali belongs to the Chadic language family (Greenberg, 1963; Blench, 2011). The community is located in Mubi and sub-divided into smaller groups including Fali of Mubi, Fali of Muchalla or Mucella, Fali of Vintim, Fali of Kiriya, Fali of Mijilu and Fali of Jilbu. According to Hoskison (1983), Fali languages and Gude are related (p. 3). Newman (2013) and Blench (2011) classified Nigerian Fali into three groups, namely the Zizilivakan group to which Fali of Jilbu belongs, the Higi group which embodies Fali of Kiriya and Fali of Mijilu, and the Gude group which includes Fali of Mubi, Fali of Muchalla and Fali of Vintim (p. 8). From the Chadic language classification, Zizilivakan, Jimjimən, Njanya, Gude and Bana fall under the Gbwata-Margyi sub-division with Njanya, Zizilivakan, Jimjimən and Gude belonging to the Gwata sub-group while Bana appears under the Margyi sub-group (Barreteau & Dieu, 2005). It is worth noting that, like Cameroonian Fali, Nigerian Fali also does not have established linguistic data.

### **Gude**

The Gude [gudée] language which was reported to be formerly called Cheke

(Greenberg, 1963; Hoskison, 1983), falls under the Afro-asiatic language family of the Greenberg language classification. The language is spoken between Cameroon and Nigeria with the population spread to borders. In Nigeria, the community lives in villages including Cikərə, Njairi, Dazal, Gyala (Gella), Gyadəkwarā, Kwadza (Koza) and others, while in Cameroon, they are found in Bukəla (Boukoula), Mabizhi, Buutəzə, Gwalazə, Dzahura, Ndəguzhi, Njerandi and Girviza (Hoskison, 1983, p. 2). Gude is considered as an umbrella language which encompasses other dialects including Fali of Jilvu, Fali of Vimtim and Fali of Muchalla (Newman, 1977, p. 36). Hence, in this study, the term *Gude languages* will be used to refer to Gude as the group of languages while *Gude D* will refer to the Gude dialect, alongside the other dialects which are Djimi and Njanyi. The language was reported to be closer to Fali languages (Hoskison, 1983, p. 3). Unlike Fali Cameroon and Fali Nigeria, Gude D has been studied, and therefore has an established phonology and syntax (Dieu & Renaud, 1983, p. 411), and with Hoskison (1983)'s study, all the four major aspects of the language seem to have been investigated.

Hence, some linguistic data are available for Gude D as some studies have been carried out on the language. The studies include Hoskison (1983) who investigated the phonology of the language among other linguistic aspects in the work entitled '*A Grammar and Dictionary of the Gude*', corresponding to Gude D in the present study. The study revealed the existence of a linear vowel system which is only characterised by length and height. In total, 4 monophthongs are attested in Gude D, namely /ə/, /ə:/, /a/ and /a:/ and 2 diphthongs, /ou/, /ei/ (p. 9). As for consonants, palatalised and labiovelarised sounds are attested in Gude D, together with plain consonants. In fact, Gude D has 23 consonants including implosives /b/ and /d/, the glottal stop /ʔ/, velar voiced fricative /ɣ/, the voiceless alveolar lateral fricative /ɬ/, the alveolar tap /ɾ/ and 14 plain consonants which include stops, fricatives, nasals, and semi-vowels (p. 10). At the tonal level, Gude D has 2 lexical tones which are level high and level low which serve to distinguish vocabulary items but not grammar (Hoskison, 1983, p. 17).

### **Bana**

Bana (code 193) belongs to the Afro-asiatic language group (Greenberg, 1963, p. 46), and is spoken mainly in the Far North region of Cameroon, precisely in Gambura and Gili which are two villages in the Mayo-Tsanaga division. Bana belongs to sub-branch A of the Biu-Mandara Branch, precisely to the Bura/Higi major group, together with Higi as language (Newman, 1977). According to Hallaire (1991), the Bana people, together with the Djimi are plateau farmers and they were forced to live in the mountains for reasons of safety in the 19th century. They mainly grow sorghum and peanut. Greenberg (1963) also recorded some morphological resemblance between Bana and Chad languages, especially at the level of feminine nouns suffixation, where 't' is 'to' in Bachama, 'ti' in Malabu and

in 'ta' in Bana (p. 46). As mentioned earlier, Bana belongs to the Margyi (Margi) subgroup of the Gbwata-margyi or margi-gbwata sub-division of the Chadic language family, along with Hya and Psikiye (Dieu & Renaud, 1983; Barreteau & Dieu, 2005). According to Dieu and Renaud (1983), no major linguistic study was recorded on the Bana language (p. 409).

From the aforementioned, there is an urgent need for a large-scale linguistic investigation, preferably by or including native speakers of the communities in order to have access to both linguistic and historical data about the communities. The urgency to study African languages was also expressed by Blench (1998), because, like the natives of other African languages, Fali speakers are progressively abandoning their native languages to the profit of Fulfulde, Hausa, French and English which are either lingua franca or the official languages of their countries. Consequently, many languages would disappear before they could be described, and even if they are to be studied any time later, the competence of the speakers from whom data will be collected would be questionable, because each generation dies with its linguistic competence as Carlin (1993) remarked, because the amount and accuracy of linguistic data depend on the generation of informants from whom the data was obtained.

### **The Notion of Intelligibility**

The notion of intelligibility has always been at the centre of discussions about languages and dialects. Nowadays, it stands as one of the most attractive areas of research, especially in the field of English language with the multiplicity of varieties that exist around the world (Atechi, 2006, p. 52). This can be confirmed by the numerous definitions and explanations that have been proposed to the word. What can be retained from the definitions is that intelligibility refers to the hearer's ability to understand the words, recognise an expression, know its meaning, and the socio-cultural value of that meaning (Catford, 1950; Bamgbose, 1998).

Several methods are used to carry out intelligibility tests, and they generally include either listening to a spoken excerpt or reading a written passage in the language or languages involved. Atechi (2006) used the listening + test method to test the intelligibility of Native and Non-Native Englishes. In his study, the listening task was accompanied by a gap filling exercise which aims at verifying if the language was intelligible to the listener, and according to the researcher, the method was considered as the best in verifying people's understandability of a language. Another method consists in asking the speakers' opinion about the language first, before conducting functional testing (Gooskens, 2013, 2017). The methods seem to be similar, even though the tasks that go with them may differ.

## Methodology Participants

Participants were 88 Cameroonians, native speakers of the languages involved in the study which include Fali North speakers (Fali Peske-Bori and Fali Bossum), Fali South speakers (Fali Kangu, and Fali Tinguelin); speakers of the Gude languages (Gude D, Djimi and Njanyi) and finally Bana speakers. The distribution of the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of participants

CamFali speakers				Gude languages speakers			Bana speakers
Peske-Bori	Kangu	Bossum	Tinguelin	Gude D	Djimi	Njanyi	Gambura
15	13	10	8	15	10	10	7
46				35			7

The languages have been grouped either according to literature (for CamFali speakers) or according to descriptions provided by the natives of Gude D who mainly live in Goloza and Burha. For Bana, although there are also varieties which include Bana Gili and Bana Gambura, only speakers of Bana Gambura have participated in the study.

## Material

For the present study, three recordings from three varieties of Nigerian Fali were used, namely the Muchalla, Vimtim and Bahuli languages. The recordings were obtained from Global Recording Network (GRN) which is a renowned organisation possessing more than 6000 recordings from various languages and language varieties in the world. The recordings consist in evangelisation messages in Fali Bahuli (1.03min mp3 file) Fali Muchalla (1.16min mp3 file), Fali Vimtim (1.37min mp3 file).

## Procedure

Participants to the study were recruited using a multi-level referral as they are either known by the researchers themselves, or by other participants. Each respondent was asked to refer other participants whom they know personally and who correspond to the profile described by the researchers to them (to be a native and fluent speaker of Bana, Fali or Gude languages). The first primary recruitees were friends, schoolmates, relatives, members of the village association, workplace neighbours, etc. This method allowed the researchers to ascertain that the informants are those who suit the research profile. The

survey was then conducted either online using the WhatsApp platform and in-person. Each informant was assigned a code with the initials of their ethnic group followed by their number in the list which served as their name either on WhatsApp or on the physical list.

The intelligibility test was conducted following the procedure used by Gooskens (2013), which includes opinion testing and functional testing. Hence, each respondent was instructed to recognise the language which is spoken in each audio and to say if they understand it very well/just some words/no one word. Then, they should say if they can also speak the language. Finally, they were asked to give a detail account of what the person in each audio was saying. The audios (1 to 3) were played to them (for those who have been met in-person) or sent to them through WhatsApp, one audio after the other. Their descriptions of the contents were later on compared with the description provided by GRN in order to ensure that they effectively understood the message with details. The results from language recognition test are presented first, followed by those from language comprehension test.

## Findings and Discussions

### Results of Language Recognition Test

The results of language recognition test for each of the three audios are presented in this section. The results from Bana and CamFali respondents are grouped and presented in the same table while those from speakers of the Gude languages which include Djimi, Gude D and Njanyi also appear together.

#### Recognition of the Language in Audio 1

In Audio 1, the message was delivered in Fali Vimtim which is one of the languages which form Nigerian Fali. The results obtained from the recognition test are presented in Table 2 for CamFali and Bana speakers and Table 3 for speakers of the Gude languages. Where the informants recognised the language as in Table 3, an additional column is provided to present their opinion about the language that was spoken in the audio.

Table 2: Recognition of the language in Audio 1 by CamFali and Bana speakers

	CamFali		Bana	
Did not recognise the language	46	100%	7	100%
Recognised the language	00	00%	00	00%

Table 3: Recognition of the language in Audio 1 by speakers of the Gude languages

Speakers	Total	Did not recognise the language	Recognised the language	The language is	
Djimi	10	00%	100%	Djimi	100%
Gude D	15	00%	100%	Djimi	100%
Njanyi	10	00%	100%	Gude D	100%

Table 2 indicates that none of CamFali and Bana speakers recognised the language in Audio1, while it can be seen in Table 3 that all the speakers of the Gude languages recognised it. When asked about the language in the audio, 100% of Djimi and Gude D speakers reported that the language is Djimi, while all the Njanyi speakers (100%) reported that it is Gude D. It is worth noting that the majority of Djimi natives indicated there is no pure Djimi, it is either Djimi Bahuli, or Djimi Bagira. The present study did not look at details about the varieties of Djimi because it was not the focus of the investigation.

### Recognition of the Language in Audio 2

Audio2 is a recording with the message delivered in Fali Bahuli. Tables 4 and 5 respectively present the results of the recognition test from CamFali and Bana speakers and from the speakers of the Gude languages.

Table 4: Recognition of the language in Audio 2 by CamFali and Bana speakers

	CamFali	Bana
Did not recognise the language	100%	100%
Recognised the language	00%	00%

Table 5: Recognition of the language in Audio 2 by speakers of the Gude languages

Speakers	Did not recognise the language	Recognised the language	The language is			
Djimi	00%	100%	Djimi	100%	/	/
Gude D	00%	100%	Djimi	73.33%	Gude D	26.66%
Njanyi	40%	60%	Gude D	100%	/	/

According to Tables 4 and 5, none of the Bana and CamFali speakers recognised the language spoken in Audio2, while 100% of Djimi and Gude D informants and also 60% of Njanyi speakers recognised it. Table 5 also indicates that 40% of Njanyi speakers did



not recognise the language. As for the respondents’ opinion about the language, 100% of Djimi speakers and 77.33% of Gude D speakers indicated that the language in the audio 2 is Djimi while 100% of Njanyi speakers and 26.66% of Gude D speakers claimed that the language in the audio is rather Gude D.

**Recognition of the Language in Audio 3**

The language spoken in Audio3 is Fali Muchalla. The results of the recognition test from Bana and CamFali speakers are presented in Table 6 while Table 7 presents the results of the recognition test for the speakers of the Gude languages.

Table 6: Recognition of the language in Audio 3 by CamFali and Bana speakers

	CamFali	Bana
Did not recognise the language	100%	100%
Recognised the language	00%	00%

Table 7: Recognition of the language in Audio 3 by speakers of the Gude languages

Speakers	Did not recognise it	Recognised it	The language is					
Djimi	00%	100%	Djimi	70%	Muchalla	30%	/	/
Gude D	33.33%	66.66%	Djimi	60%	Gude D	30%	Njanyi	10%
Njanyi	70%	30%	Gude D	66.66%	Fali	33.33%	/	/

Table 6 indicates that none of CamFali and Bana speakers recognised the language, while, according to Table 7, 100% of Djimi speakers recognised it, among whom, 70% claimed it was Djimi and for 30% of them it was the language of Muchalla. Also, 66.66 % of Gude D speakers recognised the language while 33.33% did not. Out of the 66.66% who recognised it, 60% claimed the language was Djimi, while for 30% of them, the language in the audio was Gude D, and 105 of them said it was Njanyi. It can also be observed from Table 7 that only 30% of Njanyi speakers reported they recognised the language and 66.66% of those who recognised it claimed it was Gude, while, 33.33% stated it was the Fali language, without any precision of the dialect of Fali to which they referred.

**Summary of Language Recognition Tests Results**

The overall results of the language recognition test carried out from the 88 participants are presented in Figures 1 and 2 for the three Audios with Figure 1 presenting

the proportion of recognition and non-recognition of the languages by the participants and Figure 2 indicating the proportion of recognition of the language by each community of speakers. As for Figure 3, it presents the informants' opinions about the languages in the three audios.

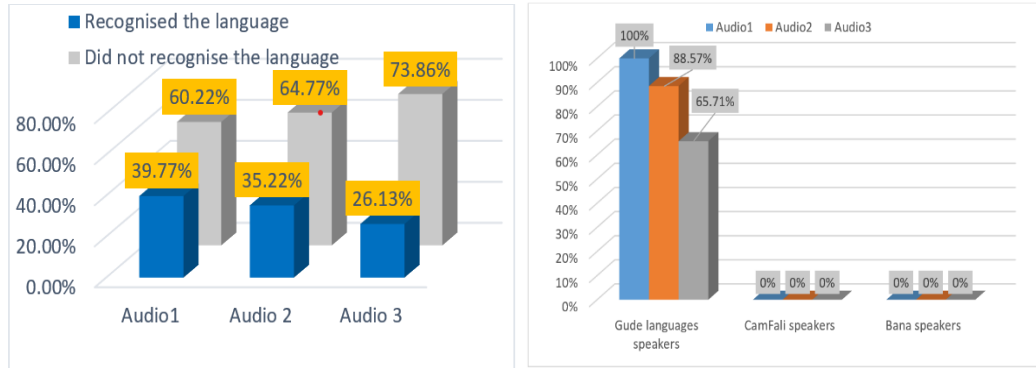


Figure 1: Language recognition proportion      Figure 2: Language recognition rate by Community

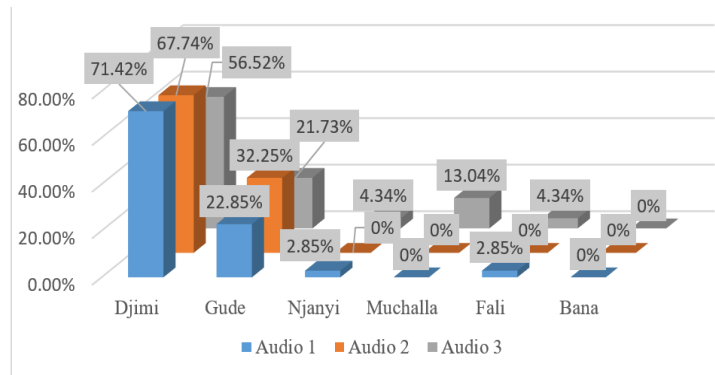


Figure 3: Respondents' opinions about the languages spoken in each audio

Figure 1 indicates that the recognition rate is very low for the three audios used in this study. In fact, only 39.77% of the total number of informants recognised the language in Audio 1, 35.22% for Audio 2 and 26.13% for Audio 3. As for the rate by individual communities, 100% of Gude language speakers recognised the language in Audio 1, 88.57% of that community also recognised the language in Audio 2 and finally 65.71% of them recognised the language in Audio 3. It can also be observed that the languages spoken in the three audios have not been recognised by any CamFali or Bana speaker which recorded 0% recognition rate.

As for the language spoken in the audio in question, for Audio1, out of the 35 speakers who recognised the language, 71.42% indicated it was Djimi while 28.57%

reported it was Gude. For Audio2, 67.74% said it was Djimi, while for 32.25% it was Gude and for the last audio (Audio3), 56.52% said it was Djimi, 21.73% thought it was Gude, and 13.04% said it was a Fali language. Also, 4.34% said it was Njanyi, and the same percentage claimed it was Fali but 0% of the respondents who recognised the language made mention of Bana.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the language recognition test is that there is no intelligibility between the Nigerian Fali that have been used in the present study, CamFali and Bana speakers, as seen in Tables 2, 4 and 6. No CamFali nor Bana speaker has recognised the languages and naturally they did not understand the message that was delivered in the audios. The lack of intelligibility between these languages implies that the three communities do not share any linguistic ancestry, confirming previous statements about the attribution of names to communities by others. The word Fali which means 'perched' in Fulfulde, was attributed to any community sharing similar characteristics, irrespective of their ancestral and linguistic origins. One of the features is their mountainous nature, since all the peoples called Fali live in mountains and hills as indicated by many studies (see Dieu & Renaud, 1983; Hoskison, 1983; Chumbow et al., 2007).

Hence, the results of language recognition test complements previous studies which indicated that Nigerian Fali fall under the Chadic language family (Greenberg, 1963; Newman, 1977; Blench, 2011), while Cameroonian Fali languages fall under the Adamawa Eastern family (Greenberg, 1963; Chumbow et al., 2007). Njanyi and Gude were reported to supposedly have 70% of similarity as they are languages belonging to sub-sections of the same language group (Seignobos & Iyébi-Mandjek, 2005), more studies need to be carried out to determine the proximity rate between the two languages.

### **Comprehension of the Messages in Audios 1, 2 and 3**

The second component of the test was about the perception of the message. As many informants reported they have recognised the language, it was worth bringing out more details about their comprehension of the message in the audios so as to ascertain that they actually understood the message. Therefore, the section presents the data obtained from the perception test and focuses on the 35 respondents who recognised the languages in the three audios.

#### **Comprehension of the Message in Audio1**

Table 9 presents data from language comprehension test conducted from the 35 informants who recognised the language in Audio1.

Table 9: Comprehension of the message in Audio1

	Djimi	Gude D	Njanyi
Recognised but don't understand	0%	0%	0%
Understand just some words	0%	40%	100%
Understand Perfectly	100%	66.66%	0%
Can speak	100%	46.66%	0%
Understood the message in detail	100%	80%	30%

From Table 9, it can be observed that all the speakers of the three dialects that form Gude languages can understand the language in Audio1, even though only 40% of Gude D and 100% of Njanyi speakers just understand some words. Also, 100% of Djimi speakers and 66.66 of Gude D speakers understand the language perfectly but none of Njanyi speakers understands it perfectly. Furthermore, 100% of Djimi speakers and 46.66 % of Gude D speakers can speak Fali Vintim which is the language spoken in Audio1, while no Njanyi speaker claimed to be able to do so. Finally, after confrontation with the description of the message in the audio provided by GRN, 100% of Djimi speakers, 80% of Gude speakers and 30% of Njanyi speakers understood the message in the audio.

### Comprehension of the Language in Audio2

The results of the perception of the message in Audio2 by the 35 speakers who recognised the language are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Comprehension of the message in Audio2

	Djimi	Gude D	Njanyi
Recognised but don't understand	0%	0%	0%
Understand just some words	0%	20%	100%
Understand perfectly	100%	66.66%	0%
Can speak	100%	40%	0%
Understood the message in detail	100%	100%	0%

According to Table 10, the results of the recognition test carried out for Audio2 indicates that all the speakers of the Gude languages understand the Fali Bahuli language, although at varying degrees. Hence, 100% of Njanyi speakers and 20% of Gude D speakers understood just some words. The test also indicated that 100% of Djimi speakers and 66.66% of Gude D speakers understand the language perfectly, as opposed to Njanyi speakers. Furthermore, 100% of Djimi speakers and 40% of Gude D speakers reported they can speak the language, but none of Njanyi speakers can speak the language. Finally, it

was revealed that 100% of Djimi and Gude D speakers perfectly understood the message while 0% of Njanyi respondents understood with detail what was said in Audio2.

### Comprehension of the Language in Audio 3

The data for the perception of the message in Audio3 are presented in this section. Hence, Table 11 highlights the answers from the 35 respondents who recognised the language.

Table 11: Comprehension of the message in Audio3

	Djimi	Gude	Njanyi
Recognised but don't understand	0%	80%	30%
Understand just some words	0%	20%	0%
Understand Perfectly	100%	0%	0%
Can speak	40%	0%	0%
Understood the message in detail	100%	20%	0%

Table 11 indicates that 80% of Gude D speakers and 30% of Njanyi speakers reported they recognised the language but did not understand the message, while 20% of Gude D speakers claimed they understand just some words. As for Djimi speakers, 100% of them indicated they perfectly understand the language, and 40% of them said they can even speak it. Finally, all the Djimi speakers understood the message, while only 20% of Gude D respondents understood the message with details.

What can be retained from language perception tests is that Djimi speakers perfectly understand the three languages (Vimtim, Bahuli and Muchalla), while Gude D speakers perfectly understand Vimtim and Bahuli languages and only some of them can also understand the Muchalla language. As for Njanyi speakers, they recognised the Vimtim and Bahuli languages as being Gude and they can only understand some words. Many Njanyi speakers claimed Muchalla is Gude altogether with the two other languages, but some of them believed it was Fali Nigeria, which implies that Vimtim and Bahuli is more familiar to them than Muchalla.

The results from language perception tests complement those from language recognition tests as they confirm that Vimtim, Bahuli and Muchalla languages are variants of the Djimi language, because not only the Djimi and Gude D speakers identified the languages as being Djimi as seen in Tables 3, 5 and 7, all the Djimi respondents asserted they can also speak the languages and perfectly understood the messages in the three audios as seen in Tables 9, 10 and 11. It is worth adding that the Djimi respondents did not limit

to identifying the languages as being Djimi as Gude D respondents did, they also provided specified details about the messages. Finally, the study revealed that Njanyi is less intelligible to Djimi and Gude D whereas Djimi and Gude D seem to be closer. This is illustrated by respondents' opinion and comprehension tests, which converge with data from Dieu and Renaud (1983) according to which the language code for Jimjimen (Djimi) and Gude D are respectively is 211, 212, while the code for Njanyi language is 220.

### **Conclusion**

The study aimed at testing the intelligibility of three Nigerian Fali (Vimtim, Bahuli and Muchalla) to Cameroonian Fali (Bossum, Kangu, Peske-Bori and Tinguelin), Bana from Gambura and Gude speakers. It was therefore discovered that Nigerian Fali are neither intelligible to Fali Cameroon nor to Bana speakers, which confirms that the term 'Fali' was attributed to the peoples without any scientific basis. Nigerian Fali and Cameroonian Fali are not the same people and they do not speak the same languages. Nigerian Fali is also not Bana, at least if Bana is also not a collective name given to peoples according to certain non-ethnic and non-linguistic features. Another major finding from this study is that Vimtim, Bahuli and Muchalla are variants of Djimi, which in turn is a Gude dialect. All Gude speakers understand Vimtim and Bahuli languages, but some of them cannot understand the language of the Muchalla. Finally, Djimi and Gude D are closely related but Njanyi which was also considered as a Gude dialect seems to be less intelligible to Gude D and Djimi as illustrated by Newman (1977).

As for the limitation of the study, the researchers were not able to test the intelligibility of Cameroonian Fali, Bana and Gude languages to Nigerian Fali speakers. Also, the research did not dig deeper into the ancestral relationship between the Gude languages as it was not the focus of the present study. Therefore, the researchers contented to treat Djimi, Gude D and Njanyi as the dialects of Gude and referred to them as Gude languages, following the recommendations from the natives of the communities who know their own story probably more than foreigners who have researched their origins and wrote their history on the one hand, and also according to Newman (1977) who indicated that Gude has several dialects including Fali of Jilvu and Fali of Muchalla and Vimtim on the other hand.

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