# MFUMTE ORTHOGRAPHY GUIDE

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| IMP | Imperative |
| Prt | Particle |

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## 1. Introduction

This paper proposes an orthography for Mfumte, classified by ALCAM (Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun) as: Niger-Kordofan, Niger-Congo, Bantoid, and Benue-Congo, Bantu Grassfield, Eastern Grassfield, North, Mfumte. It is spoken by about 24,000 people in the Northern part of Nwa Subdivision in Donga-Mantung Division, North West Province of the Republic of Cameroon. The Mfumte clan is located adjacent to the border with Nigeria. The Mfumte clan originally had 14 villages but with the resolving of the Bakassi border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria two more villages have been added to Mfumte (Ankiri and Antere) to make a total of 16 villages. Though each village has its own place of origin with its own distinct manner of speaking, they have all agreed to be treated as a dialect cluster with Lus as the standard. Apart from Ankiri and Antere which were latter added to the list, Caroline Grant et al, 1994:6 "A Rapid Appraisal Survey of Dzodinka (ALCAM 904) and Mfumte (ALCAM 905) Donga Matung Division, North West Province" presents each village and its local dialect name as follows:

| Village name | Dialect name |
| --- | --- |
| Adere | Dzodibunka or Lidzonka or Dzodinka |
| Ankiri | Ndə́wə̀ntsɨ́' |
| Antere | Ndə́'bɨ́tə̀ |
| Bang | Ndɨwubɔ |
| Bitui' | Ndaktup |
| Jui | Beẅe |
| Koffa | Kɔfa |
| Kom | Nkwɨ' |
| Kwaja | Alabufwɔ |
| Lus | Ndə'wuli' |
| Manang | Ndɨ'imaŋ |
| Mbah | Ndɨwɛmba |
| Mballa | Mbɔlɔ' |
| Mbat | Ndəkbinyi |
| Mbibji | Nde'wija |
| Ncha' | Ndaktup |

Ncha' and Bitui' share a common name "Ndaktup". Lus is the standardised variety. Mfumte and Dzodinka share a boundary with two other Grassfield languages (Yamba and Limbum) and one Jukunoid language (Mbembe).

In the Rapid Appraisal Survey for Mfumte of 1994, it is reported that they found two 120-item word lists: one in the Dzodinka variety taken by VOORHOEVE and LEROY during the ALCAM project and one in the Lus variety taken by Virginia BRADLEY of SIL in December 1992. In addition to that, at the time of our fieldwork there existed the 20 page Rapid Appraisal Survey with a 116-item Lus dialect wordlist. There also exists a small wordlist and some phonological observations on the phonemes by Dr Robert Hedinger of SIL with some pictures of an attempted alphabet chart. These latest were all in Lus which is the standardised variety.

## 2. Alphabet

The Mfumte segmental alphabet is made up of 30 consonants and 10 vowels. They are represented below in upper and lower cases:

A a, B b, Ch ch, D d, Dz dz, E e, Ə ə, F f, G g, Gb gb, Gh gh, H h, ' ', I i, Ɨ ɨ, J j, K k, Kp kp, L l, M m, N n, Ny ny, Ŋ ŋ, O o, Ɔ ɔ, Ø ø, P p, R r, S s, Sh sh, T t, Ts ts, U u, Ʉ ʉ, V v, W w, Wy wy, Y y, Z z, Zh zh.

## 2.1 Consonants

The consonant phonemes, their allophones and graphemes are presented in the table below. We also show their use in various positions in the word.

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial Position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| /p/ | [p] | P p | **pàto** *cat* | **mpɔ̀** *cow* | — |
| /b/ | [b] | B b | **bátɔ́** *again* | **mbà'** *rat* | — |
| /bʰ/ | [bʰ] | Bh bh | **bhí** *shield* | **mbhi** *breast* | — |
| /t/ | [t] | T t | **to** *head* | **bátɔ́** *again* | — |
| /d/ | [d] | D d | **dú** *hut* | **mádɔ'nkɔ̀'** *giraffe* | — |
| /k/ | [k] | K k | **kɔ'** *bundle* | **máka** *headpad* | — |
| /g/ | [g] | G g | **gúlɔ́** *look at* | **lúgù** *cassava* | — |
| /kp/ | [kp] | Kp kp | **kpə̂** *death* | **nkpɔ́** *lion* | — |
| /gb/ | [gb] | Gb gb | **gbə̀** *fail* | **ngbɔ** *salt* | — |
| /ts/ | [ts] | Ts ts | **tsó** *vomit* | **mátsíhù** *heel* | — |
| /dz/ | [dz] | Dz dz | **dzo** *quarrel* | **mándzì** *road* | — |
| /tʃ/ | [tʃ] | Ch ch | **chá** *trap* | **nghúcha** *necklace* | — |
| /dʒ/ | [dʒ] | J j | **jìgáwà** *vulture* | **mbùjù'** *rabbit* | — |
| /f/ | [f] | F f | **fɨ̀** *feather* | **mfø'** cockroach | — |
| /v/ | [v] | V v | **vɨ̀** *stomach* | **tâvə** *bad* | — |
| /s/ | [s] | S s | **sɨ́** *bird* | **másɨ́** *stop* | — |
| /z/ | [z] | Z z | **zɨ́** *kill* | **mázø** *thing* | — |

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial Position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| /ʃ/ | [ʃ] | Sh sh | **sho** *hoe* | **nshì** *ground* | __ |
| /ʒ/ | [ʒ] | Zh zh | **zhimvì** *begin* | **zhòzhó** *wither* | __ |
| /x/ | [x] | H h | **hahá'** *rough* | **hahá'** *rough* | __ |
| /ɣ/ | [ɣ] | Gh gh | **gha'** *chaff* | **bə̀'ghə̀** *flood* | __ |
| /h/ | [h] | H h | **hì'** *father* | **mâhî** *cough* | __ |
|  | [ʔ] | ' ' | __ | **mè'sí** *one* | **hî'** *chameleon* |
| /l/ | [l] | L l | **lø** *husband* | **wilə́** *weed (v.)* | __ |
| /ɾ/ | [ɾ] | R r | **rò'** *wine* | **marǜ** *smell* | __ |
| /m/ | [m] | M m | **mi'** *eye* | **lè'mə** *payment* | __ |
| /n/ | [n] | N n | **nǒ** *sleep* | **máni** *today* | __ |
| /ɲ/ | [ɲ] | Ny ny | **nyi'** *hair* | **mányu** *bee* | __ |
| /ŋ/ | [ŋ] | Ŋ ŋ | **ŋu** *moon* | **ŋɔ́ŋɔ'** *fighting over* | __ |
| /w/ | [w] | W w | **wù** *owl* | **áwǎ** *hello* | __ |
| /j/ | [j] | Y y | **yìlə̀** *curse* | **máyáyà'** *lungs* | __ |
| /ɥ/ | [ɥ] | Wy wy | **wya** *trunk* | **vøwyì** *your(pl.)* | __ |

Note: Since nearly all the phonemes are distinct, there is not much to write to explain the context for allophonic variations. Nevertheless, we should note that
- There are three semi-vowels (glides) written orthographically as: **w**, **wy** and **y**.
- Apart from glottal stop [ʔ], no consonant phone appears at word-final or syllable-final position. Therefore, we have made glottal stop an allophone of /h/.
- Whenever the letter **h** occurs before the vowel **a,** it is pronounced as [x].
- The consonants **ch** and **j** appear in very few words.
- All consonant phones appear both at word-initial and word-medial positions of words. The glottal stop ' does not appear word-initially. It appears only word-medially before other consonants and word-finally.
- **zh**, **y** and **ŋ** appear word-medially only in words with reduplicated syllables.

### 2.1.1 Prenasalised Consonants

One kind of consonant cluster found in Mfumte are clusters where the first consonant is a nasal consonant that is pronounced at the same place of articulation as the following consonant. Apart from **ch, l, r, z, zh, w, wy, y** and ' and all the nasals, all the other consonants can be prenasalised and the nasal in the prenasalised consonant is not syllabic. These consonants, which are preceded by a homorganic nasal consonant (symbolised by "N"), are given in the following chart:

| Consonant Cluster | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /Np/ | [mp] | Mp mp | **mpɔ̀** *cow* | **mpyàmpyákà** *sticky* | __ |
| /Nb/ | [mb] | Mb mb | **mbà'** *rat* | **mâmbè** *cricket* | __ |
| /Nt/ | [nt] | Nt nt | **ntò** *stream* | **mânti** *afternoon* | __ |
| /Nd/ | [nd] | Nd nd | **ndʉ́'** *water* | **mándílə̀** *boundary* | __ |
| /Nk/ | [ŋk] | Nk nk | **nke'** *bride* | **fɨnkwè** *behind* | __ |
| /Ng/ | [ŋg] | Ng ng | **nga'** *antelope* | **ndzíngè'** *soldier ant* | __ |
| /Nkp/ | [ŋmkp] | Nkp nkp | **nkpɔ́** *lion* | **mánkpéto** *bald head* | __ |
| /Ngb/ | [ŋmgb] | Ngb ngb | **ngbɔ** *salt* | **mángbɵ́** *balafon* | __ |
| /Nts/ | [nts] | Nts nts | **ntsɔ̀** *urine* | **mantsɨ'** *stem of tree* | __ |
| /Ndz/ | [ndz] | Ndz ndz | **ndzànga'** *groundnut* | **mándzɨ̀** *road* | __ |
| /Ndʒ/ | [ndʒ] | Nj nj | **njì** *a title* | **ɔ́rə́njì** *orange* | __ |
| /Nf/ | [ɱf] | Mf mf | **mfɔ̀'** *work* | **mâmfi** *crocodile* | __ |
| /Nv/ | [ɱv] | Mv mv | **mvɵ** *dog* | **ləmvì** *bottom* | __ |
| /Ns/ | [ns] | Ns ns | **nsara'** *needle* | **ngyà'nsɨ** *fish* | __ |
| /Nʃ/ | [nʃ] | Nsh nsh | **nshì** ***ground*** | **mânshà** *mud wasp* | __ |
| /Nɣ/ | [ŋɣ] | Ngh ngh | **nghɨ̌** *string* | **ndɔ́nghɨ** *grassland* | __ |
| /Nh/ | [ŋh] | Nh nh | **nhù** *flour* | **tónhulə** *knee* | __ |

## 2.1.2 Palatalised Consonants

Another kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the palatal glide [j], which is orthographically written as **y**. Some of the consonants that precede this glide may be pre-nasalised. Most stops and voiceless fricatives may be followed by this glide, as shown in the following chart:

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| /pj/ | [pj] | Py py | **pyâ** *avocado* | — | — |
| /bj/ | [bj] | By by | **byàbyà** *multicolour* | **byàbyà** *multicolour* | — |
| /kj/ | [kj] | Ky ky | **kyə̀'** *clothe* | **mbɔ̀kyɔ̀** *voicebox* | — |
| /gj/ | [gj] | Gy gy | **gyɔ́gyɔ** *truth* | **gbəgyə̀** *faint* | — |
| /hj/ | [hj] | Hy hy | **hyà** *five* | **máhyà'** *family* | — |
| /Npj/ | [mpj] | Mpy mpy | **mpyàmpyákà** *sticky* | **mpyàmpyákà** *sticky* | — |
| /Nbj/ | [mbj] | Mby mby | **mbyèrè'** *foreign* | — | — |
| /Nkj/ | [ŋkj] | Nky nky | **nkyè** *insult* | **mánkyɔ̀** *demon* | — |
| /Ngj/ | [ŋgj] | Ngy ngy | **ngyà'** *meat* | **mángyɔ** *thorn* | — |
| /Nfj/ | [mfj] | Mfy mfy | **mfyé'** *narrow* | — | — |
| /Nɣj/ | [ŋɣj] | Nghy nghy | **nghya'** *house* | **ndə̀nghya'** *roof* | — |
| /Nhj/ | [ŋhj] | Nhy nhy | **nhyáto** *hat* | **mbànhyà** *locust* | — |

### 2.1.3 Labio-Palatalised Consonants

Besides the palatal glide [j], which is always written as **y**, Mfumte also has the labio-palatal glide [ɥ], which is orthographically written as **wy**. It should be noted that so far we can only find this special glide after certain back consonants **h** and **gh**, and only before the vowels **i** or **a**. Though it appears at word-initial position in some words, only three consonants may be followed by this glide, as showing in the following chart.

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| /hɥ/ | [hɥ] | Hwy hwy | **hwyà** *hawk* | **mâhwyî** *ulcer* | — |
| /ŋhɥ/ | [ŋhɥ] | Nhwy nhwy | **nhwyi** *intestines* | **tínhwyà** *donkey* | — |
| /ŋɣɥ/ | [ŋɣɥ] | Nghwy nghwy | **nghwya** *corncob* | **ndzə̀nghwyà** *copper* | — |

### 2.1.4 Labialised Consonants

Another kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the labio-velar glide [w], which is orthographically written as **w**. Seven consonants may be followed by this glide, some of which are prenasalised, as in the following chart:

| Consonant Cluster | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /pw/ | [pw] | Pw pw | **pwɔ̌'** *abundantly* | __ | __ |
| /kw/ | [kw] | Kw kw | **kwi'** *pimple* | **mâkwì'** *flying ant* | __ |
| /gw/ | [gw] | Gw gw | **gwe'** hook (n) | **gwìgwí'** *shiver* (**v.**) | __ |
| /fw/ | [fw] | Fw fw | **fwəfá** *lend* | **fwəfwɐ̌** *borrow* | __ |
| /hw/ | [hw] | Hw hw | **hwɐ́** *take* | **máhwəkò'** *mongoose* | __ |
| /ɲw/ | [ɲw] | Nyw nyw | **nywì** *sun/god* | **mânywî** *diarrhea* | __ |
| /ŋw/ | [ŋw] | Nw nw | **nwà'** *book* | **nwɔnwì** *female* | __ |
| /Nkw/ | [ŋkw] | Nkw nkw | **nkwè** *back* | **mánkwì'** *yesterday* | __ |
| /Ngw/ | [ŋgw] | Ngw ngw | **ngwi** *firewood* | __ | __ |
| /Nɣw/ | [ŋɣw] | Nghw nghw | **nghwɔ́'** *termite* | **nyánghwɔ̀** *animal* | __ |
| /Nhw/ | [ŋhw] | Nhw nhw | **nhwɔ̀'** *basket* | **mányànhwɐ́** *hippopotamus* | __ |

### 2.1.5 Velarised Consonants

So far, we have found only one velarised consonant [bɥ] and it is used in very few words. Since in our data [w] never occurs after [b], we are able to say that [ɥ] is in complementary distribution with [w] and therefore write all the [ɥ] glides as **w**. In addition, we have so far only found this [ɥ] semivowel before the vowel **ø**, as below:

| Consonant Cluster | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /bɥ/ | [bɥ] | Bw bw | **bwɵ́** *women* | **mâbwɵ̀** *madness* | __ |
| /Nbɥ/ | [mbɥ] | Mbw mbw | __ | **wɐ́mbwɵ́** *leopard* | __ |

### 2.1.6 Consonant Orthography Rules

Various rules about which consonants can occur in which positions or which consonants can occur before and after other consonants are important to learn. Here is a partial list of consonant orthography rules:

1. Never write ' at the beginning of a word.
2. Never write any consonant at the end of a word except '.
3. Always write **ch** instead of c.
4. If you hear a nasal consonant before **p, b, f** or **v**, always write **m**. If you hear a nasal consonant before any other consonant, always write **n**.
5. Always use a capital **N** in **Nywì** to refer to God Almighty.

### 2.1.7 Consonant Cluster Chart
**Below are all the consonant clusters in Mfumte.**

|  | N- | -w | N-w | -y | N-y | - wy | N- wy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gh gh** | ngh | | nghw | | nghy | | nghwy |
| **H  h** | nh | hw | nhw | hy | nhy | hwy | nhwy |
| **K k** | nk | kw | nkw | ky | nky | | |
| **G g** | ng | gw | ngw | gy | ngy | | |
| **P p** | mp | pw | | py | mpy | | |
| **B  b** | mb | bw | | by | mby | | |
| **F  f** | mf | fw | | | mfy | | |
| **T  t** | nt | | | | | | |
| **D d** | nd | | | | | | |
| **Kp kp** | nkp | | | | | | |
| **Gb gb** | ngb | | | | | | |
| **Ts ts** | nts | | | | | | |
| **Dz dz** | ndz | | | | | | |
| **J  j** | nj | | | | | | |
| **V  v** | mv | | | | | | |
| **S  s** | ns | | | | | | |
| **Sh  sh** | nsh | | | | | | |
| **Ny ny** | | nyw | | | | | |
| **Ŋ  ŋ** | | ŋw | | | | | |

## 2.2 Vowels

Mfumte has 10 vowel phonemes, presented with their allophones and graphemes in the table below. The sounds are shown as they occur in different positions of the word. There are no long vowels in Mfumte, no nasal vowels and because of the use of the labial glide **w** and the palatal glide **y**, there are no diphthongs.

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial Position | Medial Position | Final Position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| /i/ | [i] | I i | __ | **fí'** *remove* | **tí** *palm tree* |
| /e/ | [e] | E e | **ènúnû** *that one* | __ | __ |
|  | [ɛ] |  | __ | **bé'** *lizard* | **bé** *fufu* |
| /y/ | [y] | Ʉ ʉ | __ | **nshʉ́lə́** *argument* | **ntsʉ̀** *gossiping* |
| /ø/ | [ø] | Ø ø | __ | **lø'** *fishhook* | **tǿ** *tree* |
| /ɯ/ | [ɯ] | Ɨ ɨ | __ | **nhɨ̌'** *dance* | **vɨ̌** *stomach* |
| /ə/ | [ə] | Ə ə | __ | **lə'** *law* | **tə̀** *crayfish* |
| /a/ | [a] | A a | **áwǎ** *hello* | **bátə́** *again* | **kà** *granary* |
| /u/ | [u] | U u | __ | **yù'** *stone* | **gù** *plantain* |
| /o/ | [o] | O o | **ómvø ómvø** *everyday* | **kò'** *thicket* | **to** *head* |
| /ɔ/ | [ɔ] | Ɔ ɔ | **ɔ̀** *yes* | **nyɔ'** *egg plant* | **kɔ̀** *chest* |

Note: The vowel [e] only occurs word-initially, otherwise it is [ɛ].

### 2.2.1 Vowel Orthography Rules

Various rules concerning which vowels can occur in which positions or which vowels can occur before and after which consonants are important to learn. Here is a partial list of vowel orthography rules:

1. No two vowels can be written adjacent to each other in the same word; if you think you hear two, the first should be written as a glide.
2. Only **a** and **i** can follow the glide **wy**.
3. Only **a, ɔ, o** and **e** can appear word-initially.
4. All vowels can appear word-medially and word-finally.

## 3. Tones

We have identified five surface tones in Mfumte: three level tones: high [á], mid [ā] and low [à]; and two contour tones, rising [ǎ] and falling [â].

## 3.1 Lexical Contrasts Marked by Diacritics

As of this point in time, we have discovered many minimal tone pairs for words that contrast the level tones: high, mid and low with each other and we conclude that these three tones need to be clearly distinguished from each other. It is common orthographic practice to indicate one of the most frequent contrastive tones by specifically omitting to mark a diacritic over the vowel and we have chosen the most frequent tone, the mid tone, to remain unmarked (See examples in chart below).

Though we have not found any tone pairs for rising tones against other tones among singular nouns, there are many nouns that only distinguish their plural forms by the root becoming rising. In addition, many verbs become rising in their hortative and imperative forms. We therefore conclude that marking rising tones is important in Mfumte, and that marking isolation tone on plural nouns different from singular nouns is also necessary. Since Mfumte does not have noun classes and therefore none of the Bantu noun class prefixes, the tone on the root becomes an important and necessary feature for marking plural nouns.

We have only found two minimal noun pairs that contrast falling tone with high tone (and none with any other tone). Many of the falling tones are found in two easily identified environments: on the "prefix" /mâ-/ and on the second syllable with lots of reduplicated roots (precisely where falling tone contrasts with mid tone). Because falling tones contrast with mid tones on reduplicated verb roots, we cannot leave these falling tones unmarked (as mid tones are already unmarked). We will therefore mark all falling tones with the typical falling tone diacritic.

| Tone | Phonetic | Grapheme (Diacritic) | Examples | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | [á] | á | **bá** *bullet* | very many nouns and verbs |
| Mid | [ā] | a | **ba** *beside* | many nouns and verbs |
| Low | [à] | à | **bà** *bag* | many nouns, very few verbs |
| Rising | [ǎ] | ǎ | **bǒ** *lick* | some nouns and verbs |
| High-falling | [â] | â | **bâ** *clear off* | some nouns and verbs |

Our proposal is to write all Mfumte words as they occur in isolation (i.e. as they occur when pronounced by themselves), and it is these forms that will be written in the lexicon. Mfumte speakers should have no problem reading or pronouncing the actual phonetic tones in a sentence once they recognize the meanings of the individual words in that sentence.

It is fairly easy to find Mfumte words where the only difference between them is tone. For example, note the minimal tone pairs below between the five different tones.

H-L   **bá**   [bá] *bullet*
      **bà**   [bà] *bag*

H-L   **bá'**   [báʔ] *smoke* (v.)
      **bà'**   [bàʔ] *wings*

L-M   **mvɔ̀'**   [mvɔ̀ʔ] *pumpkin*
      **mvɔ'**   [mvɔ̄ʔ] *valley*

L-M   **ndɔ̀'**   [ndɔ̀ʔ] *waist*
      **ndɔ'**   [ndɔ̄ʔ] *toad*

F-R   **bâ**   [bâ] *clear off*
      **bǎ**   [bǎ] *a bag of*

M-R   **ra**   [ɾā] *hunting net*
      **rǎ**   [ɾǎ] *uncover a pit*

| M-F | ni  | [nī] *swell*      | M-R | su | [sū] *thatch a house*        |
|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|----|------------------------------|
|     | nî  | [nî] *this*       |     | sǔ | [sǔ] *traditional medicine*  |
|     |     |                   |     |    |                              |
| M-F | lǐli | [lúlūɨ] *fly*    | L-R | bə̀ | [bə̀] *dove*                 |
|     | lǐlî | [lúlûɨ] *light*  |     | bə̌ | [bə̌] *lick*                 |
|     |     |                   |     |    |                              |
| M-F | lə́lə | [lə́lə̄] *float*  | L-R | lù | [lù] *life*                  |
|     | lə́lə̂ | [lə́lə̂] *tasteful* |   | lǔ | [lǔ] *deep*                  |

## 3.2. Grammatical Meanings Marked by Diacritics

It is our intension to study the possible need for diacritics to indicate grammatical categories at a separate time. For the moment, Mfumte speakers can use the lexical tone marking rules and see if any grammatical ambiguity arises.

# 4. Elision

When we write sentences in Mfumte, each word is written separately depending on its grammatical category and the meaning it conveys. It is evident that there are post-lexical rules in the language, which need to be explained. We want to remark that each word must maintain its full form (especially nouns) so that it can be identified in every sentence or text as one and the same word. This means that a particular word may vary in its pronunciation according to context, but it will always be written in the same way to facilitate recognition. E.g.

| Spoken (short) form | Written (full) form | Meaning |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
| [âvɔ̂] | **ávɔ̀vɔ̂** | *fine* |

# 5. Punctuation and Capitalisation

The punctuation marks and the rules that govern the Mfumte language are the same as those for English. The punctuation marks used for Mfumte are therefore as follows:

1) Full stop (.)
2) Question mark (?)
3) Exclamation mark (!)
4) Comma (,)
5) Colon (:)
6) Semicolon (;)
7) Quotation marks (" … ") and (' … ')

## 5.1 Full Stop (.)

The full stop (.) in Mfumte marks the end of a declarative sentence.

**Bìmfè kɨ́ la nghwɔ̀.**
Bimfe is go farm
*Bimfe is going to the farm.*

**Jato kɨ́ la mɨ́ nghya'nwà'.**
Jator is go to housebook
*Jator is going to school.*

## 5.2 Question Mark (?)

The question mark (?) marks the end of an interrogative sentence.

**Bìmfè zə vø lɔ́?**
Bimfe eat food has
*Has Bimfe eaten?*

**Li vøwə nde?**
name your who
*What is your name?*

## 5.3 Exclamation Mark (!)

The exclamation mark (!) is written at the end of a command, or it is placed following exclamatory words or phrases. It functions to express interjections, surprises, excitement, and forceful commands as well as simple commands as below.

**Dù!**
go. IMP
*Go!*

**Yə́ də́' dɔ́'!**
she talk much
*She talks a lot!*

## 5.4 Comma (,)

Commas (,) are used to separate clauses or parallel words within a clause, as below:

**Fúmfè minki' bì, yə́ hì'.**
Funfe child not he father
*Funfe is not a child, he is a father.*

**Bòshó tsítə̀ ngu' tɔ́, ndzɨ hwyɨ̀, pàto lábá mvǿ bywǿ mí nghya' zì.**
Bosho have fowls three goats four cat and dogs two in house his
*Bosho has three fowls, four goats, a cat and two dogs in his house.*

## 5.5 Quotation Marks (" … ")

Quotation marks (" … ") occur at the beginning and end of direct speech, as below:

**Má zì re də́'à, "Yə́ kpə́ ndəghe rɔ́?"**
mother her weep say she die why Prt
*Her mother cried and said "Why did she die?"*

**Yə́ má də́'à, "Wə̀ lá be?"**
she Past say you go where
*She said, "Where are you going?"*

Note: In English and Mfumte, other punctuation marks always precede quotation marks when they occur next to each other.

## 5.6 Capitalisation (A, B, C,…)

Capital letters (A, B, C, …) are used at the beginning of sentences, for proper nouns, and after a colon.

First word in a sentence:

**Wə́    là    nghwɔ̀.**
they    go    farm
*They have gone to the farm.*

**Kà    wə́    lá    nhi    máni.**
will    they    go    market today
*They will go to the market today.*

Proper nouns:

**Ngàrò' lá nhi    yə́ Jàtó, Ngɔ̀mfè, Gbə̀ndʉ́' lábá    Sèlɔ́'.**
Ngàrò' go market he Jàtó    Ngɔ̀mfè    Gbə̀ndʉ́' includiń Sèlɔ́'.
*Ngaro went to the market with Jator, Ngomfe, Gbendue and Seloh.*

After a colon:

**Zø    mè'sɨ́ yì    gyɔ́gyɔ:    Yə́ mɨ́ nghya' bɩ̀.**
thing    one    which is true    she in house    not
*One thing is true: She is not in the house.*

# 6. Need for further testing of the orthography

Any new orthography needs people to use it for a time before potential problems reveal themselves. It is our hope that this proposal will be a significant first step in allowing people to start reading and writing the language.

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