

Interview date: 23 Mar 2009

File name: BT and HS on old prices

Transcriber: HS

Transcription consultants: Tɔmi Gbondu.

Present: Hawa Sanja = Hawa Ngaju, Manu Joni, Boi Tua, Jilo Sigbi, Hawa Idrisa, Tɔmi Gbombu, and HS.

BT: Gwɔɔ Hawa, (εε)

ε– pɛi yema kɔn min min. 7.0

Let's go back to those (old times).

Ye jali logi la hun muigi kíníŋ,
When today has arrived all,

ye hin ga poε,
when we were growing up,

Hun ga ce pínj tabala? 14.0
How were you buying tobacco?

HS: Ya ga ce go pínj tabalε. 16.0
I was buying tobacco.

Pɛni hun kéen.
One penny only.

Pɛni lɛ hun kɛɛn hun ya ga ce pínji tàbàlé. 20.0
It was only a penny that we were buying tobacco.

Bon bun. 21.0
One head.
I.e., one head (on the penny).

BT: Hun ga ce píŋ pɛlɛla?
How were you buying rice?

HS: Pɛlɛlɛ? (Mm)
Rice?

Mm... sin pɛnsilɛ.
Mm... sixpence.

Hun ya ga ce píŋi pɛlɛlɛ. Hun gbí, oo!
That's how we were buying rice. It was a lot, oh!
I heard "gbɔɔgbɛ, oo!" for hun gbi, oo: "Nothing!"

Hun hu yi ga ce–
That's what we were–

BT: Hun ga ce píŋ ngɔnda?
How were you buying fish?

HS: Kɔndɛ. Sinbundɛ hun kɛ́ɛn. 37.0
Fish. Two pennies only.

Kɔndha landɛ ha go pɛi pan sinbundɛ tíŋ.
Their fish was going for a one-shilling pan, full-up.
TG: there was such thing as a one-shilling pan, used to put fish in.
tíŋ = id. full-up. I think also used in Mende.

Bwei? (Mm)

Kɛ ye la han gun gi, 40.0
But what is happening now,

ɛɛ–ɛ–ɛ.

Apuma logi vuí, yendε hu ha cen hɔ mBomdε, 46.0
Children of today all, the reason why they don't speak Bom,

tεm landε yi pɛi gbem ha yen, 48.0
at that time when we gave birth to them,
yen = thing, acc. to TG, but I don't know what it's doing here.

si pɛi gbem ha yen, ha sîn Bom,
though we gave birth to them, they don't know Bom,

BT: Ha sî man.
They don't know it.

HS: Hi le la go cengi háá, 54.0
We go passing for a long time,

mahun mahun ha la ye wɔm siyε. 58.0
afterward, they begin to know it.
mahun mahun = Mende. above above

Kε, ha ma go te ken,
But, they just hear it,
Should ken be kεen?

kε, ha ce lan hɔ. 1:00
but, they don't speak it.

Yin, yi ga bin Bommahilε. 1:02
We had our Bom language.
Unclear what nasal is doing here in bin.

BT: Ha ce man hɔ pɛngipɛŋ.
They don't speak it at all.

HS: ɔɔ, teya hume li pɛiŋ. 1:06

Yes, they hear it a little only.

HS: Yin, yi ga ce go cengi Bommahile. 1:07
We, we were passing in our Bom.

Pɛi gbem hi go Bomdai. 1:08
Just gave birth to us in Bom.
gbem hi or gbem ni? TG wants hi.

Landa hi kweiyɛ mBomdɛ. 1:10
That's why we took up Bom.

BT: Jalilɛ la ga ce ibɔti oo.
The business was enjoyable oh.

Kɔŋha siŋti tin,
Fish for two shillings,

ha ga ce lɔ. 1:18
they were doing.

Tɔ pɛnsi, 1:20
Twopence,

yendan hu ga ce lɔ, 1:22
the thing that was there,

tabalɛ vuí, yaŋ ya píŋ hun. 24.0
truly, tobacco, I, I bought it.

ɛ, bonandɛ, 1:27
Eh, the head,

ɛ, siŋ bun kpé, ɛ, ndɔwei lɔgi yai. 1:30
Eh, only one shilling, at the market.

–kpé is the Mende ending meaning just/only.

Gbundapi go. Ta mia wa ta wa la.

At Gbundapi. That's what you would bring it for (Mende).

εε, kutatilε, ta ga muwε, 1:36

Eh, clothes, when they arrived,

ta ga celε,

they carried them,

pεi ta welε keyandɔlε. 1:40

then they wore “candle cloth.”

TG says this keyandɔlε cloth was sold by Fullahs, who made it by holding candles to the cloth. (Batik?)

Hun (go) paa hun akwanbla lei, ha ga ce go temgeni. 1:44

The Fullahs just came, they were passing around.

akwanbla = Fullahs. Mende.

Kutati xaa, siŋ ti men bun.

Three cloths, six shillings.

(Counting on fingers in Mende:) ta, fele, sawa. Ta, fele, sawa.

One, two, three. One, two, three.

Kuta ti xaa. 1:54

Three cloths.

HS: Kuta ti xaa. Siŋ ti men bun. (εε)

Three cloths. Six shillings.

BT: Wɔ hin ga ce piŋi. 1:59

Note that here—maybe BT speaks different dial. than HS—it really sounds like pini, not even piŋi, definitely not pingi.

Wei?

Hear?

Κε ye la mui ma gun tɛmi lɔgeye,
But when it comes to this time now,

yaŋ vuí ya cala geyɛ, sindɛ kɔm gun.
I truly, I sit with lack (in my) heart now.
I'm not sure this isn't "lack of fish." Transl. from TG.

N γε, ya ma bɛ ke kɔpɔ 2:07
Because, even if I see money

si ye hun gbí,
if it's a lot,

a go paa le pin kòndé gi "oo tɔwzen bun oo,"
I just buy fish for [calling, as a market hawker:] "Oh one thousand
(=2,000 LE) oh," 2:16
"One thousand" (in Mende—"touzin yila")—is 2,000 LE. When village
people use the Engl./Krio counting words, then "One thousand" = 1,000
LE.

"tɔwzen men bun oo,"
"six thousand (= 12,000 LE) oh,"

wɔ gun paa, 2:20
just this now,
wɔ = ? Anyway, this is what I hear and TG wanted, too. Some impersonal
use of wɔ as in wò hùn lá, 'that is it.'

la hin calai. 2:22
that we are sitting in.

Pɛlɛɛ, pɛɛ saimɔ li bun, tɔ pɛnsi. 2:26

Rice, one rice cup, two pence.

TG said originally that saimɔ was 'pitcher,' then that it was cup.

Ba Mâna wɔ ga gbàtɛ Tangahun lɛ. 2:31

Pa/Mr. Mana was living at Tangahun.

TG said that gbate means 'to reach,' but that doesn't seem best transl. for this line, given context TG explained later.

Wɔn go pɛi ga ce hi wɔlɛ. 2:36

He was selling (rice) to us.

TG explained: for someone to travel to sell rice in those days meant he had a lot of money/means, like this Mr. Mana.

(HS: (speaking at same time as BT): Wɔ pɛi mu le ga ceyɛ.

He was bringing it here. (or something; hard to make out)

BT: ɔɔ, saimɔ li bin, tɔ pɛnsi. Saimɔ li bun, tɔ pɛns. 2:37

Yes, one , two pence. One cup, two pence.

Kɛ, la geyɛ pɔŋ koonuu, 2:39

but, (now) it's 20 pounds (=40,000 LE),

HS: ɛɛ, yi ga ce go tɛm ibɛndɛ. (ɔɔ)

Yes, we used to go crack palm kernels.

Yi kɔn, si yi kɔn ibacɛ ale, si yin de ibɛndɛ. 2:44

We went under the oil palm, and we picked palm kernels.

de = le = "pick up" TG.

Si yi hun tɛm gbwí gbwí gbwí gbwí gbwí gbwí, 2: 46

Then we pounded them small small small small,

i kɔ pín pɛlɛɛ.

and we went to buy rice. 2:47.5

Bɛn gi ko pɛlɛlɛ,

Put it by the rice (place/vendor),

TG: this was a direct exchange: they brought their palm kernels to the rice seller, and exchanged a certain measure of palm kernels for a certain amt. of rice.

yi pɛiŋ ye tuwo, hinbɛ bɛ tuwo ibɛndɛ, 2:51

we first measured it, we again measured the palm kernels,

tuwo = to measure out. TG

yinbɛ kɔn.

we left.

Ye lagi pɔɔgile kɔ̀̀, kɔ káti oo! 2:56

This time (?) in the world, it is hard oh!

I.e., nowadays times are hard.

BT: Pɔɔgile kɔ kón ce gbún hu.

The world goes forward.

gbun hu may be an ideophone instead of this; I hear something like vuu vuu, i.e., the world is moving quickly forward. No idea on TG's gbun hu.

Pɔɔgile kɔ kat. 2:57

The world is hard.

END SEGMENT