

Nasality in Bozo Jenaama

Christiane Lauschwitzky

SIL - Mali

Jenaama (also called Sorogaama), a Mande language of the north-western branch, belongs to a language cluster known as Bozo and is spoken in the interior Delta of the Niger River in Mali, West Africa. Its southern border is around San which is roughly 350 km northeast of the capital Bamako, its northern border Niafouké, about 80 km southwest of Timbuktu. The zone where Jenaama is spoken covers about 240 km north – south, and about 65 km east – west. It includes the administrative circles of Djenné, Mopti, Youvarou and part of Ténénkou. This paper discusses one problem area of Bozo-Jenaama phonology, namely nasalization. After an introduction about the language and its speakers, it outlines the relevant data. It then shows how an analysis without contrastive nasal vowels is possible in spite of surface contrast between nasalized and non-nasalized vowels. In a next step additional data in support of the suggested analysis is presented and exceptions to it explained. A suggestion about the nature of the underlying nasal consonant is made. Finally, a pronunciation variety of one of the dialects of Jenaama is discussed. A summary of the findings, hypotheses and solutions concludes the paper.