THE TUTRUGBU (NYAGBO) PRIMER

In order to help the speakers of Tutrugbu (Nyagbo) learn to read and write the language, I collaborated with the Togbui Osunu VI (late chief of Odumasi), Madame Judith Glover (Odumasi Primary School), and Professor Kofi Glover (University of South Florida, Tampa) to produce a primer. The title of the primer is Ṣkla Tutrugbu (I read Tutrugbu). It contains the orthography, numerals, greetings, farming practices, preparation of gari (a grain produced from frying grated cassava in a hot pan), and tapping palm wine. Also included are some folktales, riddles, and proverbs. Illustrations for the primer were done by Adjoa Walker. Unfortunately, Togbui Osunu VI passed away before the primer was completed. A draft version of the primer was presented to the community at a durbar on July 28th, 2006.

Below are some pictures taken at the durbar:

Rev. Prof. Ansre presents copies of the primer to the chiefs of Nyagbo. On his right is Madame Judith Glover, my principal language consultant.
Above are some of the people who attended the durbar, including the regent for the paramount chief Nyagbo Togbui Ashui Nyagasi IV, chiefs, queen mothers, and spokesmen for all the Nyagbo townships, and their retinue. Also present are participants of the 1st International Workshop on Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages which was organized in Ho. These two pictures were taken by Dr. Dmitri van den Bersselaar (History, University of Liverpool). Other pictures can be found at Roger Blench’s website:


Following the presentation, the paramount chief of Nyagbo Togbui Ashui Nyagasi IV constituted a committee to go through the primer and offer suggestions on corrections. Rev. Fr. Dr. Casimir Adjoe, who is himself a linguist, also offered very helpful suggestions on improving the final product. Finally, we incorporated a very helpful suggestion of the chief of Emli, Togbui Dadra V, to include spoken transcripts of the texts alongside written ones in order to make it easier for people to learn (there is a lot of deletion of affixes and assimilation of vowels in spoken Tutrugbu).