

Reading and writing Nta

(Nebenge na Neyene ka Nta)

A Guid for writing the Nta language

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Nta LIST Project

(Luke Initiative for Scripture Translation)

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Aims and objectives

In this booklet we are making recommendations to the Nta Language Committee and to the Nta community leaders on how to write the Nta language. Our purpose is:

- (1) To seek to unite the Nta people in using one spelling system and thus to encourage the writing of new books for all Nta people.
- (2) To develop a writing system that will help Nta people who can already read a Nigerian language or English to be able to read and write the Nta language without difficulty.
- (3) To develop a writing system simple enough for Nta children to learn in the schools.
- (4) To enable foreigners learn to speak, read and write the Nta language easily.

Chapter 1

The vowels of the Nta language

The Nta language has 7 vowels. Five of these vowels are written in the same way as they are in English; these are: **a**, **e**, **i**, **o** and **u**. The two other vowels are: **ɛ** and **ɔ**.

The Nta vowels are illustrated below in all three positions in which they occur: at the beginning of a word, the middle of a word, and the end of a word.

a

amar	<i>"eyes"</i>
ata	<i>"legs"</i>
alab	<i>"water"</i>
nna	<i>"mother"</i>
agba	<i>"canoes/boats"</i>
akang	<i>"salt"</i>
anɛ	<i>"people/persons"</i>

e

ero	<i>"hoe"</i>
nte	<i>"trees/sticks"</i>
eben	<i>"iron rod"</i>
eno	<i>"yam"</i>
ekon	<i>"firewood"</i>
esob	<i>"court"</i>

ɛ

ɛgbɛ	<i>"farm"</i>
ɛjɛbɛ	<i>"town/village"</i>
ɛmɛnɛgbɛ	<i>"bush"</i>

ejek	<i>“chin”</i>
nte	<i>“friend”</i>
nne/bene	<i>“four”</i>
ekam	<i>“medicine”</i>

i

isi	<i>“head”</i>
nibri	<i>“face”</i>
nsisi	<i>“land/sand”</i>
mfinkpob	<i>“grasshopper”</i>
nji/jiji/wiwi	<i>“one”</i>
esiyiri	<i>“sorrow”</i>

o

obon	<i>“goats”</i>
eno/bono	<i>“yam/yams”</i>
nkpogho	<i>“cup”</i>
jo	<i>“sit”</i>
son	<i>“carry”</i>
efon	<i>“mortar”</i>

o

orong	<i>“fufu”</i>
otong	<i>“ear”</i>
ogbo	<i>“path/track”</i>
obo	<i>“hand”</i>
wo	<i>“you”</i>
onam	<i>“grave”</i>
okoko	<i>“bees/hut”</i>

u

uju	<i>“theft”</i>
nunu	<i>“sleep/strand of hair”</i>
nkutu	<i>“white soup”</i>
nnu	<i>“hair (on head)”</i>
munnu	<i>“man”</i>

munu
tufe

“now”
“bless”

Vowels Minimal Pairs

e/ε

Nte *“trees”*
Nte *“friend”*

o/ɔ

Bono *“yams”*
Bɔɔn *“five”*

ajo *“slaves”*
ajɔ *“they were/they sat”*

abono *“prophets/seeyers”*
abɔ *“hands”*

kpo *“pack”*
kɔ *“die”*

ε/a

gbε *“harvest” (palm fruits)*
gba *“to fence”*

Long vowels

There are some long vowels in the Nta language. Some of the long vowels are: **aa**, **εε**, **ii**, **ɔɔ** and **uu**. It is possible that there are also other long vowels. We recommend that for these long

vowels the vowel letter should be written doubled. Here is one word with a long vowel:

a		aa	
eya	<i>"your/yours"</i>	eyaa	<i>"my/mine"</i>
eba	<i>"your/yours"</i>	eba	<i>"fence"</i>
ε		εε	
εβε	<i>"his/her's"</i>	εβεε	<i>"story"</i>
aye	<i>"he/she saw"</i>	ayeε	<i>"he/she saw him she saw her"</i>
Mme	<i>"i"</i>	Mmeε	<i>"moon"</i>
i		Ii	
yi	<i>"that/which"</i>	Yii	<i>"sing"</i>
fi	<i>"to burn in fire"</i>	Fii	<i>"ride/paddle"</i>
si	<i>"carve"</i>	Sii	<i>"build"</i>
ɔ		ɔɔ	
Wɔ	<i>"you/drink"</i>	Wɔɔ	<i>"all"</i>
Mbɔ	<i>"them"</i>	Mbɔɔ	<i>"cloth"</i>
Abɔ	<i>"hands"</i>	Abɔɔ	<i>"children"</i>
U		Uu	
Mbu	<i>"door"</i>	Mbuu	<i>"name of a special day in every five days in nta"</i>

