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Actes des journées scientifiques de la Faculté des Lettres,  
des Langues et des Sciences du Langage (FLSL)

tenues les 13 et 14 janvier 2026 sise à Kabala



Thème : Langues africaines et mutations sociales :

Dynamique de résilience, d'innovation et de justice sociale



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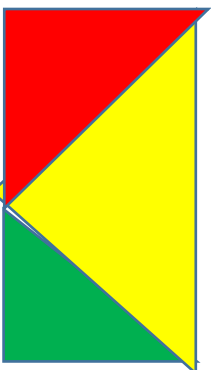
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## **Argumentaire de l'appel à communication des journées scientifiques de la FLSL**

Dans un contexte africain en constante mutation – marqué par des transitions politiques, des crises sécuritaires, des mobilités internes croissantes, ainsi que des revendications identitaires et sociales – les langues africaines s'imposent comme des vecteurs centraux de médiation, d'innovation et d'adaptation. Elles ne sont pas seulement des instruments de communication, mais des marqueurs identitaires (Bamgbose, 1991; Touré, 2023), des outils de résistance, de développement (Touré et al., 2022), et des leviers de transformation sociale. Face à la pluralité des usages et des situations de communication, il devient impératif de repenser le rôle des langues dans les dynamiques sociales en Afrique, en particulier dans l'espace sahélien et dans l'espace AES (Alliance des États du Sahel). Les Journées scientifiques de la FLSL entendent interroger les multiples fonctions des langues africaines à l'aune des défis contemporains, dans une perspective à la fois critique et prospective.

Comment les langues africaines, dans toute leur diversité et leur historicité, participent-elles à la recomposition des sociétés africaines en proie à des transformations majeures ? Dans quelle mesure ces langues deviennent-elles des ressources de résilience face aux crises (Ballo, 2024; Minkailou et al., 2023), de revendication face aux marginalisations, et d'innovation dans les champs de la médiation, de la gouvernance, de l'éducation (Nounta, 2015; Nouta et Touré, 2024;) ou encore du genre ? À travers quelles politiques linguistiques, quelles pratiques sociales, et quelles représentations culturelles se redéfinit leur place dans les processus de construction sociale ? Autant de questions qui invitent à une analyse pluridisciplinaire, ancrée dans les réalités sociolinguistiques africaines.

Le cadre théorique de ces journées scientifiques s'inscrit dans une approche pluridisciplinaire, à la croisée de la sociolinguistique critique (Calvet, 1999), de la linguistique anthropologique (Gumperz, 1982), de la sociologie du langage (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), de l'enrichissement terminologique des langues africaines (Diki-Kidiri, 2008 ; Ligan 2022) des études postcoloniales et des théories du développement linguistique (Kirmayer, 2009). Il s'agit de considérer les langues africaines non pas comme de simples instruments de communication, mais comme des systèmes socio-symboliques imbriqués dans des logiques de pouvoir, (Lakoff, 1975 ; Cameron, 1992), de résistance, de négociation identitaire et d'innovation sociale (Blommaert, 2010).

Ces perspectives permettent d'interroger les langues non seulement comme outils de communication, mais comme ressources sociales façonnées par le pouvoir, les idéologies et les dynamiques identitaires (Agouzoum, 2025).

Ces Journées scientifiques visent à ouvrir un espace de réflexion interdisciplinaire sur les fonctions sociales et politiques des langues africaines face aux mutations contemporaines. Elles ambitionnent de contribuer à une revalorisation des langues africaines, non seulement comme patrimoine culturel, mais comme leviers d'innovation sociale, d'équité et de résilience communautaire (Lezou Koffi, 2024). À travers les contributions attendues, il s'agit également de formuler des recommandations concrètes en matière d'aménagement linguistique, de politiques publiques, et de recherche-action.

### **Axes de communication**

#### **AXE 1 : Politiques linguistiques et migrations internes au Mali et dans l'espace AES**

Les mobilités internes au Mali – qu'elles soient volontaires (urbanisation, emploi, scolarisation) ou contraintes (déplacement forcé, insécurité) – recomposent les cartographies linguistiques locales. Dans un tel contexte, les langues majoritaires comme le bamanankan ou le songhay se

redéployent dans de nouveaux espaces, tandis que d'autres langues jouent un rôle de relais ou de médiation.

Cet axe interroge :

- Les langues de la mobilité : quelles langues sont utilisées dans les processus de migration intra- ou interrégionale ?
- Les dispositifs ou absences d'aménagement linguistique interrégional dans l'espace AES : peut-on envisager une politique linguistique concertée entre pays membres ?
- Le statut des langues dans les lieux d'accueil (écoles, services publics, espaces marchands) : entre intégration et invisibilisation des langues des déplacés.

### **AXE 2 : Langues minoritaires et résilience culturelle en contexte de crise**

En période de conflit ou d'instabilité, les langues minoritaires jouent souvent un rôle central dans le maintien de la cohésion communautaire, la transmission des savoirs endogènes, et la reconstruction identitaire. La résilience passe ici par des formes de créativité discursive, de ritualisation linguistique ou de réinvestissement symbolique.

Cet axe propose de questionner :

- Les usages communautaires des langues minoritaires dans les zones de crise : contes, proverbes, chants, etc.
- Les pratiques de transmission des valeurs et des mémoires collectives en situation de rupture sociale.
- Les stratégies linguistiques d'adaptation et de préservation : traduction orale, codes partagés, lexiques de résistance.
- La dimension politique de la résilience linguistique : une affirmation identitaire face aux logiques d'homogénéisation culturelle.

### **AXE 3 : Langues africaines et justice sociale ( accès aux services publics)**

L'accès aux services publics demeure fortement conditionné par la langue utilisée. Dans des contextes multilingues, le recours exclusif aux langues officielles, souvent exogènes, crée des inégalités linguistiques majeures, notamment dans les domaines de la santé, de la justice, et de l'éducation.

Les communications attendues dans cet axe pourront traiter :

- Des obstacles linguistiques à l'accès équitable aux services de base.
- Des expériences d'interprétariat communautaire, de traduction institutionnelle, ou de matérialisation des langues nationales dans les services publics.
- Des enjeux de littératie plurilingue dans la prise de parole citoyenne.
- Des propositions d'ingénierie linguistique sociale : chartes linguistiques, labellisations inclusives, etc.

### **AXE 4 : Plurilinguisme, conflictualité et médiation**

Le plurilinguisme, loin d'être une simple donnée descriptive, peut générer des tensions linguistiques, mais aussi des opportunités de médiation. Dans les espaces de négociation (famille, chefferies, instances coutumières, commissions de paix), les langues africaines sont utilisées comme outils d'apaisement ou d'assertion.

Les contributions de cet axe pourront explorer :

- Les rôles des langues locales dans les processus traditionnels de gestion des conflits.
- Les pratiques plurilingues dans les forums sociaux, les dialogues intercommunautaires ou interreligieux.
- Les enjeux liés à la neutralité linguistique dans les médiations : quelle langue pour quelle légitimité ?
- Les médiateurs linguistiques : griots, sages, traducteurs coutumiers, etc.

### **AXE 5 : Langues, genre et représentations sociales**

Les langues participent à la (re)production des rapports sociaux de sexe à travers des pratiques discursives qui peuvent être discriminantes, stigmatisantes ou libératrices. Cet axe se propose d'aborder les interactions entre langage, genre et pouvoir.

Il s'agit d'interroger :

- Les formes de sexisme linguistique : stéréotypes dans les proverbes, insultes genrées, invisibilisation grammaticale.
- Les rapports d'autorité et de silence dans les interactions sociales et politiques.
- Les transformations linguistiques dans les mouvements féministes africains (néologismes, requalifications, contre-discours).
- Les enjeux du langage inclusif en langues africaines : entre tradition et modernité.

### **AXE 6 : Langues africaines et littérature**

La littérature en langues africaines participe aux dynamiques de résilience, d'innovation et de justice sociale dans les sociétés africaines contemporaines en mutation. Cet axe explore en quoi l'écriture littéraire en langues africaines contribue à la sauvegarde et à la revitalisation du patrimoine linguistique et culturel africain. Il interroge:

- Comment les écrivains utilisent-ils les langues africaines pour résister à l'homogénéisation culturelle et linguistique mondiale ?
- Quelles formes nouvelles de création littéraire (orature numérique, poésie urbaine, slam, etc.) émergent à partir des langues africaines ?
- Comment les écrivains négocient-ils entre l'héritage oral et les exigences de l'écriture moderne pour inventer de nouvelles esthétiques littéraires ?
- Comment les choix linguistiques dans les œuvres littéraires traduisent-ils des positionnements politiques ou éthiques face aux inégalités sociales et aux questions de justice ?

### **AXE 7 : Langues africaines à l'ère de l'IA**

L'intelligence artificielle (IA) ouvre des perspectives inédites pour la valorisation, la documentation et la diffusion des langues africaines. Toutefois, ces technologies restent largement dominées par les langues hégémoniques, reproduisant des inégalités linguistiques dans l'espace numérique. Ce sixième axe propose d'interroger:

- Les enjeux de l'inclusion linguistique africaine dans les systèmes d'IA, qu'il s'agisse de reconnaissance vocale, de traduction automatique, d'archivage sonore ou de modélisation sémantique.
- Les initiatives locales et panafricaines visant à entraîner des corpus en langues africaines, à intégrer ces langues dans les assistants virtuels, ou à concevoir des bases de données linguistiques ouvertes.

- La gouvernance linguistique des technologies de l'IA, les risques de standardisation ou de folklorisation numérique, et les stratégies d'appropriation communautaire des outils d'IA dans une perspective de souveraineté technolinguistique.

## **AXE 8 : Axe libre**

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**Morphological and semantic analysis of Dogon toponyms of the villages of Ireli and Amani,  
Sangha cercle, Bandiagara region.**

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**Abstract**

The present study explores the morphological and semantic structures of Dogon place names in the villages of Ireli and Amani located in the Sangha district of the Bandiagara region in Mali. Place names, as linguistic markers, reflect the cultural, historical, and environmental dimensions of the communities that create them. In Dogon land, and more specifically in the villages of Ireli and Amani in the commune of Ireli, place names reflect centuries of linguistic evolution, oral traditions, and interactions with the natural landscape. However, despite their cultural and linguistic richness, Dogon place names in general, and those of Amani and Ireli in particular, remain understudied by academics, especially in terms of their morphological structures and their meanings. Using a linguistic and ethnographic approach, we analyze the patterns of place name formation, their underlying meanings, and the sociocultural factors influencing their evolution. This research identifies recurring elements, syntactic structures, and semantic categories that characterize Dogon toponymy, highlighting how geographical features, historical events, and local traditions shape naming conventions. The findings contribute to a better understanding of Dogon linguistic heritage and its role in preserving authentic knowledge, strengthening the link between language, identity, and space.

**Keywords** : Place names, morphology, Ireli, Amani, semantics, toponymy

**Résumé**

La présente étude explore les structures morphologiques et sémantiques des toponymes dogons dans les villages d'Ireli et d'Amani de la commune d'Ireli situés dans le cercle de Sangha, région de Bandiagara au Mali. Les toponymes, en tant que marqueurs linguistiques, reflètent les dimensions culturelles, historiques et environnementales des communautés qui les créent. Au pays dogon, et plus particulièrement le village de Ireli et Amani dans la commune de Ireli et le cercle de Sangha, les toponymes reflètent des siècles d'évolution linguistique, de traditions orales et d'interactions avec le paysage naturel. Cependant, malgré leur richesse culturelle et linguistique, les toponymes dogons en général et en particulier celle d'Amani et Ireli restent peu étudiés par les universitaires, notamment

en termes de structures morphologiques et de significations sémantiques. S'appuyant sur une approche linguistique et ethnographique, nous analysons les schémas de formation des toponymes, leurs significations sous-jacentes et les facteurs socioculturels influençant leur évolution. La recherche identifie les morphèmes récurrents, les structures syntaxiques et les catégories sémantiques qui caractérisent la toponymie dogon, mettant en lumière la manière dont les caractéristiques géographiques, les événements historiques et les traditions locales façonnent les conventions de dénomination. Les résultats contribuent à une meilleure compréhension du patrimoine linguistique dogon et de son rôle dans la préservation des connaissances authentiques, renforçant le lien entre la langue, l'identité et l'espace.

**Mots-clés :** morphologie, Ireli, Amani, sémantique, toponymie

## **I- Introduction**

Like other cultural groups in the country, the Dogon people, in order to ensure their survival, felt the need to name the people and things in their environment. Names are closely linked to the identity, language, and culture of a social group (Hanks, 2004). A name is a label that reveals the identity of the things named. The social act of naming a place has both communal and personal significance. It provides information about the tribes that first occupied the place and the person who founded it. A name also gives information about the circumstances in which people or things are named. This shows that there is a general philosophy underlying naming, and that the social practice of assigning a name in human society is of paramount importance. Names are therefore social constructs and reflections of social experiences, shaped by cultural, historical, and personal factors (Hanks, 2004). This is why the names given to the same phenomenon differ from one society to another. These names constitute the sociocultural expression and elucidation of the concept of self.

Furthermore, only human beings possess the ability to name things and individuals. In other words, the mechanisms of naming are unique to the human species.

Onomastics, from the Greek "onoma," meaning name, is the science of the etymology of proper names.

It aims not only to extract all possible information from proper names, but also from place names (toponymy) and personal names (anthroponymy). Onomastics is also a branch of linguistics that studies proper names in general: anthroponyms, toponyms, zoonyms, names of unique objects and institutions, scientific works and artistic literature, etc. Onomastics considers proper names, on the one hand, as a linguistic phenomenon, that is, a matter of linguistics involving studies of common vocabulary, nomenclatures, and etymological research ; on the other hand, as a reality that can be topographical, archaeological, historical, or sociological (Mulon, 1977).

Yalcouyé (2022), in his article entitled, "Morphological and semantical analysis of toponyms in Bamako and surrounding areas in Mali" identifies and describes the typology of toponyms of the city of Bamako and surrounding areas. It clearly analyzes the morphological and semantic components of the names of the various neighborhoods of Bamako and its surrounding areas with a view to demonstrate the system on the basis of history, events, key activities or political ideology, etc.

Yalcouyé's article did not treat Dogoso toponyms but Bamako and surrounding. However, this article deals with the Dogon cultural practice of toponymy from the morphological and semantic perspectives in the region of Bandiagara.

Yalcouyé's work provided a ground for analyzing the system of place naming along with its physical characteristics such as river names and mountains. This piece of work was useful in this review because it allowed us to know that, often, a given language was spoken in the locality under

investigation rather than the one that is being currently spoken. For instance, first inhabitants who conquered a new territory could give the place a name of their convenience in their own language.

Kodio A, et al. (2020), Minkailou (2017) and Napare (2018) are three Malian author who deal with anthroponomy, not toponymy.

Kodio A, et al. (2020) conducted another study on Dogon anthroponyms in three remote rural communal villages (Madougou, Barapireli and Dangatene) in the municipality of Koro, Mopti former Region. This study is an ethno-linguistic account of naming system in the *toroso* speakers' community. The article analyzes the naming systems of the Dogon people and their underlying socio-cultural functions and provides an insight into the classification and circumstances characterizing the Dogon personal names. It should be noted that the article by Kodio et al. did not tackle the problem of our research which is the investigation of the toponymic practice in the municipality of Sangha.

Toponymy is the science that studies the origin of place names and their transformation over time. This science relies on historical writings, the roots of names, their history, and their geographical location.

Onomastics encompasses numerous branches : "ethnonymy," the study of ethnic names ; toponymy, the study of sites and places ; and anthroponomy, the study of personal names. It plays a considerable role in elucidating historical facts.

Some neighborhoods bear the names of their founders. A surname is a personal name. We are born with a proper name, and it is an integral part of our identity. Benveniste (1976) defines a proper name as: "a conventional marker of social identification that allows for the constant and unique identification of an individual" (p. 19). A toponym is a word or group of words used to indicate, designate, or identify a geographical location, such as a city, a river, or a mountain. Taken together, the toponyms of Ireli and Amani confer diverse identities upon their inhabitants, illustrating the variety of their relationships to these places.

In addition, Minkailou (2017) published an article about the anthroponyms of southern Bamanan in Mali. His study revealed that names have always been carriers of history and markers of language and culture. Even though Minkailou does not directly interfere with the Southern Bamanan toponymic practices, toponyms also share the same qualitative characteristics of carriers of history, identity and cultural markers. A toponym can provide significant information about the foundation of villages and the cultural conditions and contexts surrounding the first settlers of the place. However, the author overlooked the system of naming places, which this work attempts to explore.

Onomastics considers the proper name, on the one hand, as a linguistic fact—that is, a fact that requires the study of everyday vocabulary, nomenclatures, and etymological research—and on the other hand, as a reality that can be topographical, archaeological, historical, or sociological (Mulon, 1977). In other words, toponymy is the science that studies the origin of the names of villages, hamlets, or inhabited places, as well as their evolution over time. This science relies on historical writings, the etymology of names, their history, and their geographical location. Therefore, the origin of place names remains a field of scientific interest. Furthermore, it can be said that proper names are rich in meaning, or at least more significant than common nouns. We believe there is a close relationship between places and toponyms. It is important for the well-being of individuals to know the places and place names in their environment. Knowing the places and place names in one's neighborhood is part of the community spirit (Viljamaa-Laakso 1998, 364). As synchronic and diachronic expressions linked to places of varying sizes, place names are a vital part of everyday language as well as individual and collective memory and identity (Eskeland, 2001). The most common procedures for naming place names include using the names of prominent people in the

neighborhood or town. Some place names also refer to an event, an animal, a geographical feature, a historical event, etc.

Napare (2018), in his communication, ranges the Dogon first names in two orders: scientific and symbolic. On the scientific plan, it obeys the principles and methodological norms of social studies. On the symbolic plan, the present analysis estimates that the disappearance of the Dogon first names and all other cultural elements is an immense loss of a whole part of humanity. If we consider that fact, the analysis helps to strengthen all ideological and political positioning for a scientific rebirth of Africa. We learn from Naparé's communication that the management of the retorts to cultural loss can be difficult if the arrangements to reinforce the inter-cultural dialogue are not made in order to prevent the crises between generations and cultures. Be that as it may, Napare overlooked the development of toponymic system in the Dogon land although his work did inspire us a lot in terms of methodological and scientific procedures involves in analyzing onomastic data.

Furthermore, place names and their usage are considered forms of discourse that can be useful in revealing and understanding ideologies, identities, and messages conveyed through various place-naming practices. Toponymy denotes the importance of languages in a given territory through the system of naming various places. The use of toponymic terms serves both informational and symbolic functions. Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25) find that the following linguistic elements enrich onomastic lexicology : "road signs, billboards, street names, place names, shop signs, and public signs on public buildings." In other words, place-naming serves a dual purpose : to identify a place while simultaneously creating a sociocultural situation that openly commemorates historical figures, events, places, and ideals. In the same perspective, Rose-Redwood and Kim (2020) consider that the naming of places is linked to power structures and identity discourses, which is in fact a potentially contested spatial practice that results in multiple and competing place names.

The problem with this study is that most work on onomastics focuses on the problem of defining place names rather than on the social role these names play in societies like ours.

The toponymy of Ireli and Amani remains understudied, which is why this article explores the phenomenon in order to demonstrate its social significance. Literature in Dogon toponymy is very rare

However, Tagadiou, (2024), in his Master's thesis entitled "Morphological and Semantic Analysis of Dogon Toponyms in the Municipality of Sangha and Surrounding Villages, Region of Bandiagara," African names are not rhetorical but are believed to convey a deep meaning for the place or bearer. The community also uses naming as part of indigenous knowledge systems.

Within this framework, the present study has the following specific objectives :

- to record the types and forms of place names in Ireli and Amani ;
- to provide the literal and contextual meanings of place names ;
- to identify the main themes around which village naming is based by analyzing the relationship between humans and nature.
- to examine the correct spelling of the toponym in dogoso.

Analysis of the objectives stated below indicates that the following research questions are relevant to conducting this study :

- What are the typologies of Dogon place names in Ireli and Amani ?
- How could they be described ?

- What is the relationship between humans and nature in the naming of place names in Ireli and Amani ?

-what is the correct spelling of the toponym in dogoso ?

Amani and Ireli toponyms hold a morphological structure and an important semantic signifiante derived from Dogoso and reflect historical, geographical and sociocultural realities of their communities. Amani and Ireli toponyms are formed from lexical element derived from Dogoso and their morphological analysis allow us to discover their original meaning.

**II- Methodology**

This study was conducted in Ireli and Amani. It analyzes the morphology and semantics of place names in Ireli and Amani to demonstrate their social significance.

This study prioritized a qualitative method, allowing for a descriptive and analytical approach. For this study, we approached key figures, particularly resource persons (12 villages chiefs and 12 notables), who could provide information on the meaning of their village names. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through interviews conducted with village chiefs and other elders residing in Bamako who are native speakers of the local language. Secondary data were gathered from previous studies carried out by scholars, with a particular focus on toponymic issues. In addition, administrative records from local town halls were consulted to obtain official information concerning the names of the villages of Ireli and Amani.

All interviews were recorded in Dogoso and French and then translated into English. The data are described by generating themes from the interviews, which are used later in the discussion of the study's results. These themes include the naming of place names according to plant species, landforms, surnames, anthroponyms, ethnonyms, major events, situational circumstances, experiences, etc. The Dogoso and French responses are preserved in their original form to ensure authenticity, even though they were translated into English for data analysis for publication purposes.

**III- Results and Discussion**

This section describes the key points and issues that emerged from the data analysis. This description highlights the relationships between the variables and data categories. Furthermore, we present here a discussion of the data, not simply a report of the results

This section on main results deals with what was considered the study's findings or the answers to the research questions. Consequently, only impressions derived from the analysis and interpretations are presented as main results.

In naming the villages of Ireli and Amani, the dwellers refer to several elements of their surrounding reality. The tables below present the different names of the villages of Ireli and Amani, their morphological and semantic components, morphological segmentation, number of elements, transcription, motifs (themes), and literal and contextual meaning.

**3.1 Typology of Dogon place names in Amani related to animals**

*Table 1: Dogon toponyms related to animals*

Nom administrative	Nom originel en dogoso	Morphological Structure	Number of Elements in the compound word	Meanings	
				Literal meaning	Contextual meaning

1 -Amani Dianogou	anhuurun jɛinɔŋ	/anhu/ caiman /urun/ hole /jɛi/ quarrel / neighborhood	4	Neighborhood for quarrelling crocodile	Inhabitants in this neighborhood are known for quarrelling.
2- Amani Ogodoumo	anhuurun ɔgɔdumɔ	/anhu/ caiman unru/ hole /ɔgɔ/king /dumɔ/stone	4	King stone neighborhood	The neighborhood is dedicated to the king of the tribe
3-Amani Pongonron	anhuurun -pɔŋɔron	/anhu/ caiman / unru/ hole / pɔŋɔron/ street	3	Crocodile hole environment	This neighborhood was a place where crocodiles used to wander.
4- Amani Soban	anhuurun -sɔmbaŋa	/anhu/ caiman /unru/ hole /sɔm/ horse /baŋa/ owner	4	Crocodile hole horse owner	The first neighborhood where the village chief lived. He owned a horse in his chiefdom.

The place names in the table above evoke the close relationship between humans and animals in the Dogon environment in general, and in the village of Amani in particular. Through these place names, we see that the Dogon people are environmentally conscious. They care for all living beings in their environment. A village can be named after anhuurun jɛinɔŋ, a place name composed of four elements, which in tɔɔɔɔ means "crocodile hole." According to legend, some inhabitants left an earlier village and, while wandering, discovered a body of water where crocodiles dug burrows to live. Charmed by the place, they settled there and named it accordingly.

There is one village whose name's morphological structure is composed of three elements:

/anhu. urun pɔŋɔron/: anhu (caiman), urun (hole), and pɔŋɔron (street). This village takes its name from the inhabitants who decided to follow the same path. Anhuurun pɔŋɔron is a toponym formed from a compound word.

The three villages whose toponyms have four elements:

/anhu.urun.jɛi.nɔŋ/ is composed of four morphemes: anhu (caiman), urun (hole), jɛi (quarrel), and nɔŋ (neighborhood). This neighborhood takes its name from a quarrel or dispute, as its inhabitants are believed to be constantly arguing. /Anhu // urun/, /jɛi /, and /nɔŋ / are suffixes.

/anhu.urun.ɔgɔ.dumɔ/ is composed of four morphemes: /anhu/ (caiman), /urun/ (hole), /ɔgɔ / (king), and /dumɔ/ (stone). This toponym derives its name from the stone, the king's seat. It is believed that the kings of this district lived exclusively on rocky surfaces. /Anhu/ is a free morpheme, while /urun/, /ɔgɔ/, and /dumɔ / are affixes, suffixes in this specific case.

The name /anhu.urun sɔm.baŋa/ is composed of four elements: /anhu/ (caiman), /urun/ (hole), /sɔm/ (horse), and /baŋa/ (owner). This toponym takes its name from the horse's owner, the head of the neighborhood.

The relationship between the first inhabitants of Amani village and animals was invaluable. They established a non-aggression pact with them in the form of a "totem." This totem, or non-aggression agreement, is a pact by which humans and animals commit to refraining from any mutual aggression. In practical terms, this means they abstain from attacking one another. Thus, the animals proved useful during difficult times, such as crossing rivers, and the humans expressed their gratitude for their benevolence. In the village of Amani, even today, the inhabitants care for these animals and neither kill them nor consume their meat. These villagers now consider these animals their grandparents and use affectionate expressions when addressing them. They use a term like "baba." They do not call them directly by their names. In these Dogon villages, humans and animals live side by side, and neither attacks the other.

In Dogon country, nothing is left to chance. The same is true for the naming system. Some place names refer to animal names, which means that the village founders had compassion for animals. Most often, animals are considered very useful in guiding and helping humans in their search for places to live. Indeed, when naming their villages, the people refer to various elements of their environment. The different elements that make up the village names are presented in the form of place names. The morphological and semantic structure, the number of morphemes, the transcription, as well as the literal and contextual meaning are also presented in order to better analyze and understand the toponyms of Ireli and Amani in the municipality of Ireli, Sangha circle, Bandiagara region.

### **3.2 Overview on the History of Amani**

The village of Amani was founded by Anrandjogourou. He was a powerful and mysterious hunter. He roamed extensively on horseback, traversing much of the escarpment as far as the Burkina Faso border. The village of Amani is located in the commune of Ireli, in the Sangha district, on the slopes of the Bandiagara escarpment. It is bordered to the east by Yayé, to the west by Téréli, to the north by Sangha, and to the south by Béréli. Amani is a group of four villages: Amani Dianogou, Amani Ogodoumo, Amani Somban, and Amani Pongonron.

The people of Amani are known by the surname Poudiougou, which is said to mean "miraculous emergence into nature." They respect and worship an aquatic animal that has become their totem: the crocodile.

#### **The first version**

According to information from A.P., Amani derives from its true name /anhu unru/, which means "the caiman's hole." The village's name was supposedly distorted upon the arrival of the administrators, whose Fulani interpreters did not speak the language. Instead of "anhu unru," they transcribed it as Amani, a meaningless term in the local language. It was not the white people who founded our village.

#### **The second version:**

According to G.P., after the great Dogon migration from Mandé, Amani did not exist: the village was then called "sombagna," which meant "the owner of the horse." One day, a child fell ill with an incurable disease, and his parents abandoned him near a "Somba" (a local term for a small, or sacred, animal). The villagers cared for him. When they did not see him again, the parents believed him dead and began searching for him. They arrived at the village of "Somba" and questioned the chief, the protector of children. They explained that they were looking for their child, and he advised them to go and see him among the other children who were playing. They found him there, full of joy. They then said, "i anwan kɔi," which means "the child has gained weight" in the Tɔɔɔ dialect.

**3.3 Overview on the Geography Overview on the :** The village of Amani is renowned for its pond populated by sacred caimans, some of which reach two meters in length. The caiman is considered the ancestor of the villagers and receives funeral rites befitting a human being. It has been sacred to the Dogon people of Amani for centuries, ever since they left the Manding region.

Following research into the semantics of the village of Amani, two versions have emerged:

### 3.4 Typology of Dogon Place Names Related to the Environment

The place names presented in the table evoke mutual support among people in the Dogon world. The Dogon people are open and help strangers regardless of the circumstances. They are very attentive to their environment. This is why the naming of places and spaces includes many elements. The remainder of this article traces the history of the foundation of Dogon place names, particularly in Irelí.

**Table 2:** Typology of Dogon place names related to the environment

Nom administrative	Toponyms	Morphological Structure	Number of elements	Meanings	
				Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
1-Irelí bara	/ene.ire baara/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /baara/ contour	3	It's better here - to contour	When the inhabitants got down the hill, the road was blocked and they decided to get around. This contour gave way to the name of the neighborhood.
2-Irelí dama	/ene.ire.dama/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /dama/ neighborhood	3	Better - neighborhood	It means that this neighborhood is the best place to live.
3-Irelí Ganié	/ene.ire gani.ye/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /gani / spread /ye/ to be	4	It's better here - to enlarge the area	This neighborhood refers to growth and fertility.
4-Irelí Ida	/ene.ire i.dana/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /i/ child /dana/ set	4	It is a better - Sit a child	This toponym means that the place was founded further to the fact that the founder sat a child in hope for settlements.
5-Irelí Nattaye	/ene.ire na.tai/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /na/ public	4	It's better here to - public place	The inhabitants in this neighborhood decided to choose

		/tai/ place			this place as a public one.
6-Ireli gnerin	/ene.ire ɲinrin/	/ene/ here / ire/ better / ɲinrin/ jump	3	It's better to jump	When the occupants wanted to settle in this neighborhood they were disturbed and decided to jump into the inappropriate place.
7-Ireli Oro	/ene.ire.oro/	/ene/ here /ire/ better /ɔɔ/ baobab tree	3	It's better - baobab trees	The neighborhood refers to the place where there were lots of baobab tree which is used for many things.
8-Ireli Toro	/ene.ire.tɔɔ/	/ene/ here /ire/better /tɔɔ/fetish	3	It's better - fetish	This neighborhood represented the place where holy places used to be. The neighborhood symbolizes a sacred place.

Among the eight villages of Ireli, five names are composed of three elements and the other three are composed of four elements.

/Eneirebaara/: ene (here), ire (better), and baara (to bypass). This toponym designates a pleasant neighborhood, a good place to live. /Eneirebara/ is a compound word, /Ene (here) is an adverb, /ire (better) is an adjective, and /baara (to bypass).

Furthermore, /Eneiredama/ is composed of three elements: /Ene (here), /ire (better), and /dama (to push). This neighborhood is dedicated to development. /Eneirebara/ is a compound word, /Ene (here) is an adverb, /ire (better) is an adjectival root, and /dama (to push, to progress) is a verbal suffix. /Eneireɲinrin/ is composed of the following three elements: /Ene (here), /ire (better), /ɲinrin (jump). This neighborhood derives its name from hard work and discipline. /Eneirebara/ is a compound word: /Ene (here) is an adverb, /ire (better) is an adjectival root, and /ɲinrin (jump) is a verbal suffix.

Furthermore, /Eneireɔɔ/ is composed of the following three elements: /Ene (here), /ire (better), /ɔɔ (baobab). This neighborhood takes its name from the baobab tree, a symbol of power. It is a more pleasant place to live because the presence of numerous baobab trees evokes strength. //Eneire ɔɔ/ is a compound word, /Ene (here) being an adverb, /ire (better) an adjectival root, and /ɔɔ (baobab) a nominal suffix.

/Eneiretɔɔ/ is another compound toponym (3) with the following elements: /Ene (here), /ire (better), and /tɔɔ (deity). This neighborhood is named after a deity. It is said that the deities protect the inhabitants. //Eneire tɔɔ/ is a compound lexeme, /Ene (here) being an adverb, /ire (better) an adjectival root, and /tɔɔ (deity) a nominal suffix. There are three villages whose place names contain four morphemes:

/Eneireganiye/ a place name composed of three elements: Ene (here), /ire (better), gani (stay), ye (do). It's better here – to enlarge the area. This neighborhood refers to growth and fertility.

/Eneireidana/ a place name composed of three elements: Ene (here), /ire (better), /I/ (child), /dana/ (set). It is a better place – sit a child. This place name signifies that the location was founded based on the founder's belief that a child was born there in the hope of future settlements.

/Eneire natai/ a place name composed of three elements: Ene (here), /ire (better). It's better here – a public place. The inhabitants of this neighborhood decided to designate this place as a public space. As previously mentioned, they are linked to nature, moral values, possession, etc.

The original village of the "DOUYON" people, Ireli, is located in the Sangha district, on the slopes of the Bandiagara escarpment. It was the administrative center of the canton before Mali's independence.

It is subdivided into eight villages, including eight Togunas (village councils), and the ninth Toguna is considered the supreme court where major and urgent village decisions are made.

A welcoming tourist village. Religions practiced include Islam, Christianity, and animism.

Agriculture is the primary activity, but they also raise livestock, engage in trade, and grow vegetables. Ireli, whose true name is "Eneire," means "it's better here." During the great Dogon migration from Mande to Kani-Bonzon, some of them ended up in Sangha. A group of brothers decided to go for a walk and arrived at the edge of the escarpment. They preferred the place and settled there, naming it "Ene ire" in the Toroso dialect, which also means "it's better here."

During the colonial period, white administrators and their Fulani interpreters distorted the transcription of "Ene ire" into Ireli.

All the inhabitants of the village bear the surname Dougnon. Ireli is subdivided into eight villages, including eight Toguna, all of which are important meeting places; each place name has its own history.

#### **IV-Conclusion**

This article aims to analyze the morphological and semantic structures of Dogon place names in the villages of Ireli and Amani, located in the commune of Ireli, Sangha district, Bandiagara region of Mali. Through a linguistic and geographical approach based on interviews with village chiefs and notables, this research has highlighted the mechanisms of place name formation as well as the cultural meanings they convey.

The analysis also reveals that Dogon place names are not simply geographical labels, but rather genuine cultural and identity markers, testifying to the close relationship between the population, their environment, and their history.

In the tradition of linguistic toponymy, place names are generally analyzed based on their morphological structure, their etymological origin, and their semantic motivation. According to Dauzat (1926), place names often originate from three main sources: natural elements (relief, vegetation, fauna, geography), human and social activities, and finally, the names of people or ethnic groups.

The results show that the toponyms studied are primarily based on compound morphological structures made up of three or four elements. The phonetic and orthographic transformations of these toponyms in Ireli and Amani during the colonial period also illustrate the effects of linguistic and administrative contact on local naming systems.

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