A Grammatical Sketch of Kove: Some Challenges
Hiroko Sato
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Research Issues

- Indifferent or negative language attitudes
- Negative feelings about working on their language
- Unawareness with the importance of their language
- Indifferent about preserving their language

Outline

- The background of Kove
- Some challenges
- My work and goals

Kove

Language Situation

- 34 villages
- 8000 people living in Kove
- Five other indigenous languages spoken in broader region
- Due to modernization, educational developments, and social interactions, Tok Pisin and English are used frequently in place of Kove.
Education In Kove

- Five primary schools
- No secondary schools
- Kove is used for the first and second year as an instruction language. (Only English after that.)
- Neither Kove language nor Kove culture are taught.

Some challenges: before one even starts to write a grammar

- What if speakers’ attitudes are indifferent to their language?
- What if speakers don’t care whether the language is spoken or not?
- What if speakers are not interested in working on the language?

Observation I:

- They don’t care what kind of data I collect.
- They don’t care whether I make a grammar book or a dictionary.
- They don’t understand why I am there and what I want to do.
- Elder speakers see nothing wrong if they lose the language.

Observation II

- Wasim ahe-mu
  wash
  leg-2sg
  ‘Wash your legs.’

- Children cannot fully understand.
- Children do not fully acquire Kove.
- Parents choose Tok Pisin for their communication.
- Parents don’t care whether their children speak Kove or not.

Observation III

- A consultant: Willing to help
- Community members:
  Why did she help me?
  What was the advantage to her?
  No benefits from me and my research
  → Stopped her from helping me

⇒ Other community members: negative feelings about my research and my visit

⇒ Problems

- Indifferent or negative language attitudes
- Negative feelings about working on their language
- Unawareness with the importance of their language
- Indifferent about preserving their language
  ⇒ Difficulties before one starts to write a grammar
My work

- A few great consultants
- Recording stories and elicitation
  → a couple of publications and presentations at conferences
  → Grammatical Sketch project
- Have a good relationship with the community

Plans and Goals: To build a corpus

- The corpus includes audio and video recordings.
- Narratives (myths, historical stories, legends, children’s stories); public events (ceremonies and rituals); and conversations (daily matters, politics)
- Texts that the community allows to be released will be provided with IPA fonts, interlinear glosses and English translations.

Plans and Goals: Producing a Grammar

- Based on the documentary method
- I will provide links in the grammar to sources of data, establishing that examples exist in a corpus of texts with cross-reference numbers.
- The lexicon of each text, as well as elicitation, will be entered in a dictionary using interlinearization in Toolbox.

Plans and Goals: Archiving

- The files will be deposited with sufficient metadata: folder number, title, speakers, language name, time and location of recording, linguistic type, description, genre keyword and so on.
- The formatted data will be stored at Kaipuleohone, which is a digital archive out of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Hawai'i.
- The data will be also deposited in the University of Hawai'i library system for long-term security.

Plans and Goals: Archiving at Kaipuleohone
Conclusion: What should I do?

› Create a solid foundation of Kove documentation for future research

› Continue my good relationship with the community

› Keep talking to the community about the importance of their language

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