Collaborating with Speech Communities in Language Documentation

13-ICAL @ Academia Sinica, Taipei
19 July 2015

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

1. Introduction
2. Case studies
   a. Klata
   b. Isinai
   c. Guinaang Kalinga
3. Sociolinguistic factors affecting collaboration
   a. Language vitality
   b. Socio-political structure
   c. Motivation (interest)
4. Immediate outcomes of language documentation related to language development
5. Conclusions:
   Benefits of collaboration in the language documentation projects
Language Documentation
a Documentary linguistics

‘concerned with the methods, tools, and theoretical underpinnings for compiling a representative and lasting multipurpose record of a natural language or one of its varieties.’ (Himmelman 2006).

GOAL

- meet the needs of the speakers
- support in language maintenance

(Austin 2010:13)
Language documentation requires active and collaborative work with community members both as producers of language materials and as co-researchers. Himmelmann (2006:15) quoted in Austin and Grenoble (2007)
Views on Collaboration in Language Documentation

Documentation is increasingly done by teams, including community members, rather than ‘lone wolf linguists;’ both the technical skills and the amount of time required to create this corpus make it difficult for a single linguist, working alone in the field, to achieve. (Woodbury (2003) quoted by Austin and Grenoble (2007))
A linguist working on an endangered language must submit to the authority of the community administrators. At every turn, the linguist will have to compromise long-range scholarly goals to meet the community’s immediate needs. Gerdts (2010: 191)
Collaboration Spectrum in Language Documentation

‘lone-wolf’ linguists (?)
Woodbury (2003)

The linguist’s goals are essentially subordinated to the community’s goals, with the assumption that the community can and should be the sole deciders of the direction of the research.

‘new age’ collaboration
Leonard and Haynes (2010)

“One-way” relationships meant only to fulfill their own academic goals rather than collaboration benefiting the language community as well...
Community-Engaged Research Continuum (Clinical and Social/Behavioral)

Source: Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Clinical and Translational Research 2008 (Looking at CBPR Through the Lens)
Employed Basic Oral Language Documentation (BOLD) protocols as described by Reinman 2010 and Boerger 2011
**BOLD PROTOCOL**

Reinman 2010 & Boerger 2011

- **Basic**- minimum corpus that can generate descriptive work on the language
- **Oral**- original recording + careful speech + oral translation + oral discussion
- **Breadth first**- aims for a corpus that is greater in quantity and with a variety of speech acts
Philippine Map
Showing the Location of the 3 case studies

Kalinga Guinaang (Sept. - Dec. 2014)

Isinai (July 2013)

Klata (Dec. 2011- May 2012 intermittent)

Source: http://mapsof.net/map/philippines-regions-and-provinces
**KLATA** [bgi]

- Classification: Bilic language
- EGIDS level: 7
- Socio-cultural profile:
  - lowland (Davao City)
  - mixed with Cebuano and Manobo speakers
  - consider themselves as Bagobo.

Source: Ethnologue (2015)
Isinai  [inn]

- **Classification:** Central Cordilleran
- **EGIDS level:** 7

**Socio-cultural profile:**
- lowland
- mixed with Ilokano and Tagalog speakers

Sources: Ethnologue (2015); Cruz, L (2013); Cruz, C M (2010)
Guinaang [knb]

Classification: Central Cordilleran, North Central Cordilleran, Kalinga-Itneg, Kalinga

Dialects: Lubuagan, Banao/Vanaw, etc.

EGIDS level: 6a

Socio-cultural structure:
- upland, ‘isolated’
- cohesive society
- cultural system supported by existing political structure

Sources: Ethnologue (2015), Gonzales 2015
Sociolinguistic factors affecting collaboration

- geography
- identity
- attitudes + more
- socio-political structure
- language vitality
- economic
- motivation
## Factor 1: Language Vitality

### Collaboration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low number of proficient speakers</td>
<td>High number of proficient speakers from all generations</td>
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**Isinai & Klata** EGIDS 7  
- worked mostly with grandparents generation who are quite few  
- younger generation - highly proficient in LWC; lots of code switching

**Guinaang** EGIDS 6A  
- High number of proficient speakers from all generations who are more than willing to participate in the project.  
- Working with communities or groups of speakers instead of few knowledgeable individuals.
**Factor 2: Socio-Political Structure**

**Collaboration**

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**Klata**
- The speech community is within political unit; mixed with several dominant language group.
- But they have traditional political system (datu) and elders(?) who can decide for the community.

**Isinai**
- The speech community is within political unit, mixed with the major language group.
- They don’t have traditional political system. The Senior Citizens.
- The speech community is composed of 5 separate political units but bonded together as a tribe (same ethnolinguistic identity).
- There are young leaders in both gov’t & tribal systems who are speakers of the language.
- Participatory decision making process is the norm by having a village/tribal assembly to decide on matters of concern and policy-making.
**Factor 3: Motivation (Community Interest)**

**Collaboration**

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guinaang</strong></td>
<td><strong>KLATA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Only the older generations and the leaders are interested</td>
<td>Need to assert their identity for IP rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Language development need (MTB-MLE; literacy in the L1, etc.)</td>
<td>- Poor knowledge in the local language and culture expressed by the elderly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Proud of their language and culture.</td>
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Some Immediate Outcomes Related to Language Development

**Klata**
- The community held a ‘Klata Cultural Day’ event where the Klatas from different villages gathered to celebrate and discuss what they will do about their language situation.

**Isinai**
- Partnered with the Ethnoarts team who helped in notating what remains of the Isinai traditional/original songs. These notations would be useful in passing on the songs to the next generation.

**Guinaang**
- Documented cultural events (i.e., Bagungon or traditional funeral practice) and oral discussion about the event was used by an elementary teacher as content to his MTB-MLE class.
- Other groups became more aware of the need and also desire to document their language.
Conclusions

Our attempt at collaboration helped us with:

**Project Initiation**
- Proper entrance in the community—with permission (in some cases, invitation) from authority
- Municipal local government unit support; endorsed to the village and sectoral leaders

**Project Implementation**
- More individual and groups of speakers involved in the project
- Advocates who ushered us to participate and document cultural and official events (village and municipal level)
- Broader sampling and wider array of corpus
- Relationship building- gained more credibility and trust
- Increasing community awareness and advocacy on language development issues;
- Inspiring more dreams about what they want to do with and in their language.
“Ultimately, only the community can save its language. This is the foundational truth around which everything else revolves... It is the intangible yet powerful will of the people most concerned that will ultimately prevail.” (Edwards, 2010)
References


Philippines Regions and Provinces. [http://mapsof.net/map/philippines-regions-and-provinces](http://mapsof.net/map/philippines-regions-and-provinces)
SALAMAT PO!

any questions?

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