

Survey Report of the North Coast of Irian Jaya

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Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Map of Survey Area
- 3 History and Logistics
 - 3.1 Masep
 - 3.2 Yoke
 - 3.3 Airoran
 - 3.4 Samarokena
- 4 Linguistic Situation
 - 4.1 Masep
 - 4.2 Yoke
 - 4.3 Airoran and Samarokena
 - 4.4 Comparative situation
- 5 Sociolinguistic Data
 - 5.1 A note on the use of Bahasa Indonesian
 - 5.2 Masep
 - 5.2.1 Intragroup contact
 - 5.2.2 Contact with Malay
 - 5.2.3 Economics
 - 5.2.4 Education
 - 5.2.5 Religion
 - 5.2.6 Social relations
 - 5.2.7 Language use
 - 5.3 Yoke
 - 5.3.1 Intragroup contact
 - 5.3.2 Contact with Malay
 - 5.3.3 Economics
 - 5.3.4 Education
 - 5.3.5 Religion
 - 5.3.6 Social relations
 - 5.3.7 Language use
 - 5.4 Airoran
 - 5.4.1 Intragroup contact
 - 5.4.2 Contact with Malay
 - 5.4.3 Economics
 - 5.4.4 Education
 - 5.4.5 Religion
 - 5.4.6 Social relations
 - 5.4.7 Language use
 - 5.5 Samarokena
 - 5.5.1 Intragroup contact
 - 5.5.2 Contact with Malay
 - 5.5.3 Economics
 - 5.5.4 Education
 - 5.5.5 Religion
 - 5.5.6 Social relations
 - 5.5.7 Language use
- 6 Status of Translation Needs
 - 6.1 Masep
 - 6.2 Yoke
 - 6.3 Airoran
 - 6.4 Samarokena

References

1 Background

A survey of the area between Sarmi and the Apauwer River was carried out by Jim and Sandy DeVries, Peter Silzer, and Carol Erickson-Kalmbacher in 1978. The languages surveyed included Isirawa, Yoke, Samarokena, Masep, and Airoran. Word lists were taken and a short discussion on the sociolinguistic situation in these areas was written. Since that time, people from Samarokena have contacted the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Abepura, requesting that they begin language work in their area. At various times during the past twenty-five years, Samarokena has been on and off the SIL priority allocation list.

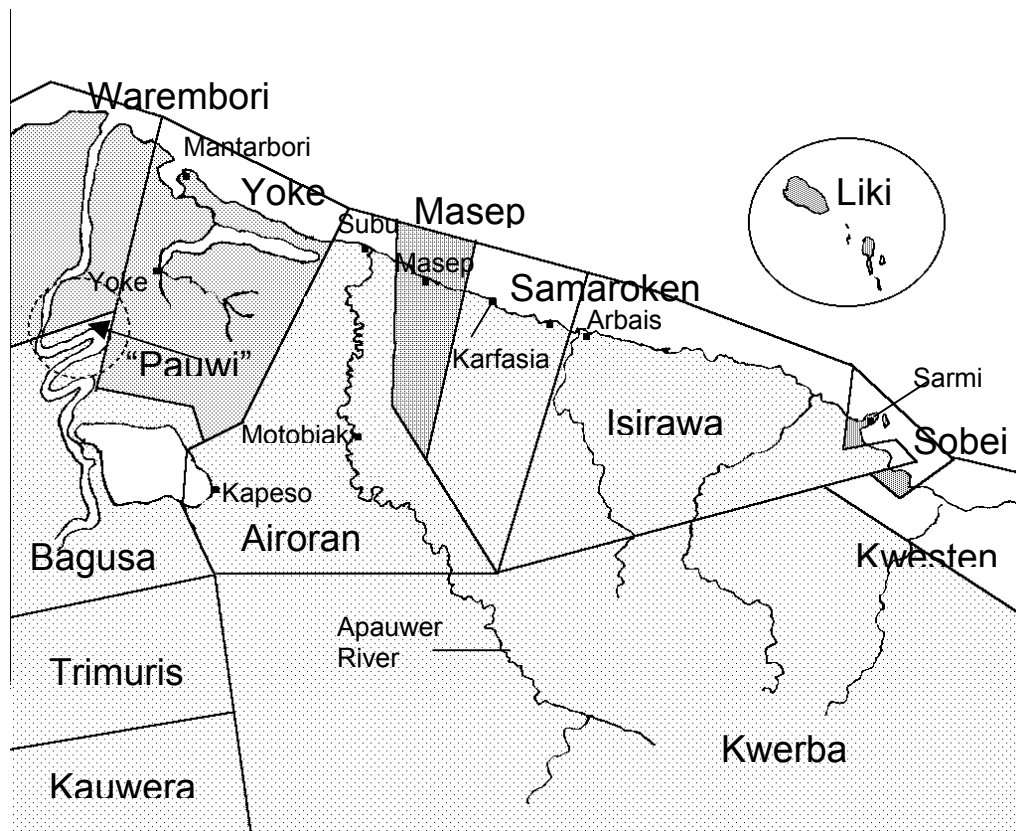
In July 1998, Felix Ma of SIL came to Irian Jaya to check out potential allocation sites for beginning language work. He was interested in working in a coastal setting. This, coupled with Mark Donohue and Duane Clouse also being involved in doing survey work at the time, created a good reason to revisit the North coast area and reassess the linguistic and sociolinguistic situation there, as well as to give Felix Ma an opportunity to see this part of Irian Jaya.

The goals of the survey were to (1) take more up to date, complete word lists, (2) gather some grammatical data, (3) reassess the sociolinguistic situation, (4) reassess the status of translation needs, and (5) give Felix Ma an opportunity to have a taste of survey work and see the interior.

Through the help of Agus Maniagasi of Yajasi, a double outrigger canoe, a twenty-five hp. motor, and two operators were arranged to take us from Sarmi to the villages we wished to visit for the next five days. The survey team provided the fuel and oil for the motor and food for the operators. We were able to leave Sentani, arrive in Sarmi, check in with the police, arrange the boat, and travel to Masep on the first day. Traveling westward, the sea was calm.

The second day we traveled to the village of Mantarbori in the Yoke language area and spent the night. The third day we visited the village of Subu in the Airoran language area and spent the night there. The fourth day we returned to Masep in the morning and then walked to Karfasia in the Samarokena language area. We spent the day there and then walked back to Masep and spent the night. The fifth day we returned to Sarmi and made arrangements to fly back to Sentani on the next day.

2 Map of Survey Area



3 History and Logistics

3.1 Masep

Masep was first surveyed by van der Leeden in 1955 and then again by SIL in 1976. It was reported both times that there were only thirty to forty speakers and it was listed as a “dying language.” Although we did not find many more speakers, it is far from being a dying language. It was vigorously used by all sectors of society.

Masep village can be reached by outrigger canoe from Sarmi in about four hours. It can also be reached by foot from Sarmi in a full day of very hard walking (and crossing rivers) with no rests. As boats do not often frequent Masep village, the people usually walk if they wish to go to Sarmi.

3.2 Yoke

This language was formerly listed as Yoki. It was first surveyed by Jim DeVries (SIL) in 1978, who did not attempt a language classification other than “Papuan.” Another language, Pauwi, is listed as being in the same area, based on a word list taken by van der Aa in 1885. Wurm-Hattori listed this language as a “Phylum-Level Isolate.”

In January–March 1998, Mark Donohue conducted an extended survey of the lower Mamberamo, including the Yoki/Pauwi area. He has concluded that Pauwi was the same as the Yoki language, or a dialect of it. The language area is larger than previously thought, and there are more speakers. Finally, the government name for the language is Yoke, which will be used in this report, rather than Yoki.

The Yoke people originally lived around Lake Rombesai, but the government made them move to the coast near Mantarbori, though they maintain links to their traditional area.

The area of mostly mangrove and sago swamps can be reached from Sarmi by motorized outrigger in about eight hours. It can also be reached from Warembori in an hour and a half by speedboat, or three hours of paddling in inland inlets. Warembori is serviced by a passenger ship from Biak/Serui and Jayapura every two weeks.

3.3 Aironan

The Aironan people originally lived along the Apauwer River and in the hills between the river and Lake Rombebai. In more recent times one group were resettled on the coast at the mouth of the Apauwer. The people, however, still look to the interior for their food and sustenance.

The latest estimated population for the Aironan people was four hundred (DeVries 1991), but this is probably too low. The Aironan people have three main villages, but there seem to be a sizable amount of people who do not live in a village. The population is more likely between seven hundred and one thousand.

The people in Subu have very positive feelings toward outsiders because of their experience in the mid-1970s with the Hurd family who lived there.

The Aironan area can be reached by motorized canoe from Sarmi in about six hours. It is a three day walk from Sarmi, but walking seems to be a common way of getting there; this is to the coastal village of Subu at the mouth of the Apauwer. The interior villages can also be reached from Subu by canoe or from the Aurimi airstrip in the Kwerba area a week's travel up the Apauwer River.

3.4 Samarokena

The Samarokena have four main villages, but many do not spend the majority of their time there. Three of the villages are in the interior, two are several day's walk from the coast. Their estimated population is four hundred. This estimate is probably low.

The Samarokena have been asking for language and translation work to begin in their area for two decades. We found that they are still very much in want of a program and would be eager to help anyone willing to work with them.

The Samarokena area can be reached by motorized canoe from Sarmi in a couple of hours. There is now a road being built from Sarmi to Arbais, which borders the eastern edge of the Samarokena area. The coastal villages in the Samarokena area are considered, by the local people, to be within easy walking distance of Sarmi, meaning that a mere predawn departure followed by an entire day without rest at a fast pace can lead to a postsunset arrival.

4 Linguistic Situation

We surveyed four village locations in the trip, finding four different languages. Of these, all but one language belong to otherwise established linguistic groups, the Greater Kwerba Stock and the Lower Mamberamo family. Only one language, Masep, was surveyed that had no relationship to any of the other languages around it or, it seems at this stage, to any other known languages in New Guinea. Individual notes on two of these languages will be given in the sections following, followed by some basic observations on Aironan and Samarokena, and then a comparison of the languages.

4.1 Masep

Masep was the most interesting of the languages surveyed and fortuitously was also the first and last village visited in the survey area. As regards linguistic affiliations, it became clear very quickly that Masep was not related to the Kwerba-family languages around it,

The only previous notes on Masep can be found in survey lists taken in 1978, and in Van der Leeden (1975) an anthropological survey.

In terms of structure, the language has an unusual phonological system, with a skewing in the distributions of stops and consonants. The following phonemes were (tentatively) identified.

	t	c	k ^w ?	k ~ q		
		j			i	u
			g		e	o
Φ	s	ʃ			a	
B			Γ			
m	n	ɲ				
w	r	y				

[some instances of a syllabic r were recorded, such as: σα|γρ ‘machete’; the status of these segments remains uncertain]

Regarding morphosyntax, Masep displays the normal New Guinean SOV (subject, object, verb) word order pattern, with case marking for oblique relations and for an accusative. Verbs are inflected according to a split-intransitive system, with affixes for nonactive participants. Number is marked by number/tense suffixes for all subjects or agents. The prefixes that mark a nonactive participant are also those used to show possession. The different pronominal sets are:

	Free Pronoun	Stative /Poss prefix
1sg	ka	kw- / ko-
2sg	gu	Φ- / Φo-
3sg	eBl	iBy- / Ø-
1pl	ɲi	ɲu-
2pl	je	imΦ-
3pl	iBe	imΦ-

Extensive use of case marking helps to distinguish the core and noncore arguments of a clause. Suffixing on the verb indicates a variety of different tense/aspect/mood distinctions, the extent of which awaits further investigation. Some examples of the case markers are shown following.

Accusative:	-o / -u / -a	Location:	-(a)Bri
Dative:	-Γoke	Goal:	-ni
Instrumental:	-aBeno	Time:	-a
Associative:	-meno		

Examples of these prefixes and case markers can be seen in the following sentences.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------|----|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) | a. | <i>/gu ko-war-emon</i> | b. | <i>ka icin-o</i> | <i>Φartasiunu-Γoke</i> |
| | | 2SG 1SG.U-see-t/a/m | | 1SG stone-ACC | throw dog-DAT |
| | | 'You see me.' | | 'I threw a stone at the dog.' | |
| (2) | a. | <i>ko-osa Φuai</i> | b. | <i>ka saremna</i> | <i>ya Φ-aBri</i> |
| | | 1SG.U-tired:t/a/m | | 2PL sit:t/a/m | house-LOC |
| | | 'I'm tired.' | | 'You all sat in the house.' | |

Deeper syntactic information for Masep was not obtained in the short time we had available.

4.2 Yoke

Yoke is the language of the village of Mantarbori, and the inland area around the village of Yoke. Historically, the Yoke report having occupied the villages of Kapeso and Suaseso on the northern edge of Lake Rombebai, but this land is currently occupied by Bagusa speakers. Yoke is a member of the Lower Mamberamo family, along with Warembori, the language spoken at the mouth of the Mamberamo River and to the west.

These are the only two languages in this family; it does appear that there was, at a not too distant time, another language in the family, Pauwi (around 1885), spoken at the northwest end of Lake Rombebai. Comparing the Pauwi words reported with those obtained in 1998 for Warembori and Yoke, it appears that Pauwi was either a third, now extinct, language of this family, or that the word list was a mixture of Yoke and some Warembori. The location described for the word list puts it firmly in the land that we associate with the earlier inland, location of the Yoke people, around the north shore of Lake Rombebai, and also with the most inland reach of the Warembori hunting and sago-cultivating area.

The apparent surface phonemes are shown in the following chart, though a more abstract analysis would do without many of these.

p	t	k		
b	d	g	i	u
B	r	Γ	e	o
m	n	ɲ	a	
w	s	y		

Structurally, the language is very atypical (in a Papuan context), having a regular SVO word order (a feature it shares with Warembori), and prepositions (also shared with Warembori). Verbs show subject prefixes and optional object suffixes, which, given applicatives, may be more than one.

The pronominals of Yoke are as shown in the following chart.

	Free	Subject prefix	Object suffix
1sg	eBu	e-	-e
2sg	aBu	a-	-a
3sg	iBu	i- / ya- / Ø-	-i
1pl	kiBu	ki-	-oΓo
2pl	miBu	mi- / im-	-amo
3pl	siBu	si-	-esi

Although there are several prepositions, extensive use of applicative suffixing make these less common than might be expected. Furthermore, nominal incorporation of objects makes the verb very important and very contentful in Yoke. An example of a large, but not exceptional, verb is given in (3).

(3) *EBu e-raB-upia-Bi-r-a-na-kumamba-o.*

1SG 1SG -chop.down-sago.tree-BEN-THM.CONNS-2SG.OBJ-INSTR-axe-INDICATIVE

'I have already chopped down a sago tree with an axe for you.'

The preceding example also shows the use of a thematic consonant on the verb, the function of which is as yet unclear, and which appears to serve to divide the verbal lexicon into a series of transitivity classes.

The exact genetic classification of the Lower Mamberamo family with respect to any other known linguistic groupings in Irian Jaya is still in doubt, and there are either very strong Austronesian influences on this family, or (Warembori at least) represents a strongly Papuanised Austronesian language.

4.3 Airoran and Samarokena

These two languages will be treated together, since very little of their structure was discovered, and they appear to share similar phonologies.

The relevant phonemes appear to be:

p	t	c	k ^w	q	l	u
m	n				ʃ	ʃ
w	r	y			⊕	(⊗) ʌ
(β)	s			h	a	

Unusually for Kwerba-Stock languages there appears to be a distinction between s and h in these languages. There are also some instances of a stressed schwa appearing in the data, suggesting that schwa might also be a contrastive sound, which is not the case for the inland Kwerba languages, but is reported in the other coastal member of the stock, Isirawa.

These phonemes parallel those in the inland Kwerba languages with the addition of an s/h contrast, and a B (or p?) phoneme, which seems to have arisen from the k^w phoneme in earlier proto-Kwerba, judging from the apparent sound correspondences (e.g., inland

Kwerba *uk^w*, Airoran *ig^wi*, Samarokena *iBia*.) The seven-vowel system that appears to be a feature of most Kwerba languages is present in these languages as well.

The free pronouns in the languages are:

	Airoran	Samarokena
1sg	aca	ata
2sg	ama	ama
3sg	aupa	awa
1du	ɪnɪna	n/a
1pl	ena	niina
2pl	?	nama
3pl	awaap	awara




[there does not appear to be a dual/plural distinction in the Samarokena pronominal system; we did not successfully elicit the 2pl form in Airoran]

Due to the complexities of the Kwerba-family verbal systems (see; e.g., DeVries 1991), we did not even attempt an analysis of the deeper levels of the language structure.

They both appear to be languages of the Greater Kwerba Stock, though with significant differences to those languages located inland along the Apauwer and Mamberamo Rivers.

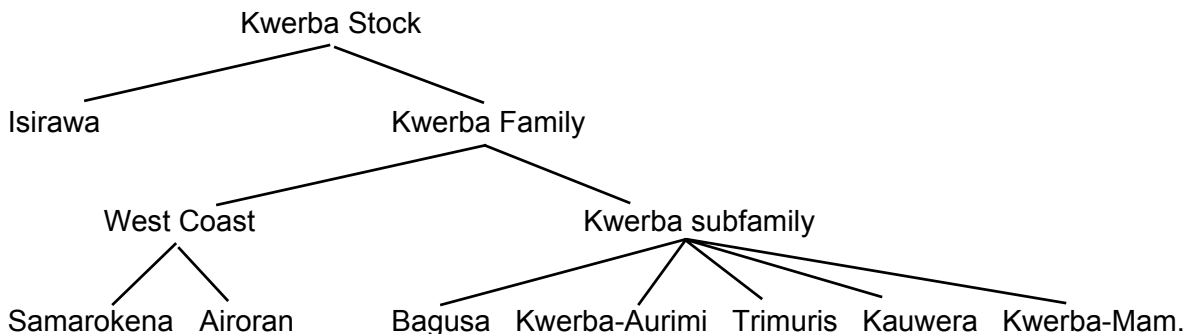
4.4 Comparative situation

The following table shows the approximate lexicostatistical relationships between the languages under question. To the four languages investigated have been added Isirawa (data from Erickson 1976) and Aurimi Kwerba (Data from Yon-Soo Kim 1999), of the Greater Kwerba Stock, and Warembori (data from Donohue 1999), the only known relative of Yoke. Due to the random variation found in samples produced from survey word lists, the exact figures for comparisons that yielded less than five percent cognates is not given, simply the note that the cell scored less than five percent (<5 in the following table). When the usual criteria for family-level (Romance or Germanic depth) relationship of twenty-eight present or more are applied, we clearly split into three genetic groups, as indicated.

Isirawa						Kwerba Stock		
21	Samarokena							
15	33	Airoran						
10	23	32	Aurimi Kwerba					
<5	8	8	<5	Masep		isolate		
<5	<5	<5	<5	<5				Lower Mamberamo family
<5	<5	<5	<5	<5				
				Yoke				
				33	Warembori			

These figures clearly support a major division between Isirawa and the other Kwerba languages, and Kwerba from the other two. The relatively high percentage obtained between Airoran and Aurimi Kwerba is possibly attributable to the attested trade up and down the Apauwer River, as well a more substantial intermarriage between the two groups than with Samarokena, which is separated from the other main Kwerba languages by Masep to the west, and extensive hills to the south. We suggest, on the basis of these figures and the observed sound changes that characterize the other Kwerba family languages, that the following tree represents the Greater Kwerba Stock (leaving the

position of Airoran as more closely related to Samarokena than to the inland languages as unresolved at the present).



(Using Kwerba-Aurimi to refer to the variety of Kwerba spoken in Aurimi and the upper Apauwer River in general (DeVries 1991; Kim 1999), and Kwerba-Mam. to refer to the variety spoken in Kwerba, on the Mamberamo River. Consultation with speakers of the language in Kwerba (Mamberamo) village reveals that they do not object to the use of the name, Kwerba, to indicate the Aurimi-Apauwer variety).

The other genetic affiliation that has been proposed for these languages, the Dani-Kwerba Stock, does not, in the opinion of the authors, have any validity, but this is not relevant for the low-level classificatory purposes discussed here.

The suggestion (Silzer and Heikkinen 1984, and later editions) that Masep is a member of this group, we reject, given that there is no linguistic data that supports this conclusion. The only indication that Masep might be related to the Kwerba family comes from its location, but both the linguistic information and the oral histories of the Masep and Subu peoples do not support this inclusion. Voorhoeve's (1975) comment that "the language is quite different from the neighboring languages of the Kwerba family" appears to be correct.

As already mentioned, the further affiliations of the Lower Mamberamo family are as yet unknown, though it is fairly certain that there is no genetic connection with the other languages included in this survey, or others of the nearby New Guinea area (Bauzi family, Kwerba languages of the Mamberamo, Burmeso). The only likely outside connection of these languages is with the Austronesian languages of Cenderawasih Bay, as already mentioned, and this requires further investigation.

5 Sociolinguistic Data

5.1 A note on the use of Bahasa Indonesian

The closest town where standard Bahasa Indonesian is spoken is Sarmi. Bahasa Indonesian (BI) is undoubtedly spoken on occasion in Arbais, the county for all of the languages surveyed, but by a limited number of people. Even in the city of Sarmi, we found that Irianese Malay (hereafter referred to as Malay), rather than standard Bahasa Indonesian, was most often used by most sectors of society. In the villages we found that standard BI was neither used nor greatly understood, even by those who had had schooling in government schools. Therefore, in this survey we will be commenting on the language group's use of Malay, rather than BI.

5.2 Masep

Our overall impression was that this is a small group that is successfully hanging on to their identity. They are surrounded by much larger, linguistically unrelated groups. They are far away from services and economic opportunities. One gets the impression that they feel proud of who they are but vulnerable in their situation.

5.2.1 Intragroup contact

The Masep language, which in the vernacular is called *Wotaf*, is only spoken in the village of Masep by under fifty speakers. The village is four hours by boat from Sarmi. The Masep people relate mostly with the people of the villages of Subu and Karfasia. The language is only used among the Masep people themselves. In dealings with the Subu and Karfasia peoples, the Masep use Irianese Malay to communicate. The same is true of Subu and Karfasia people who visit Masep village. There are instances, due to marriage, where a spouse will learn the Masep language as an adult and use it.

5.2.2 Contact with Malay

Masep men travel to Sarmi a couple of times a year, which is an entire day's walk (the most common mode of travel) or four hours by boat. In Sarmi they use only Malay for interaction with non-Masep speakers. Most men, therefore, would be fully competent in the use of Malay.

There are only two outsiders who live in the village of Masep; the government health worker and the religious leader. The government health worker is from Sarmi, and the religious leader is from Matewar. Neither one of them can speak or understand Masep. The Masep people use Malay in conversation with these people; others, not speaking a second language, cannot communicate. Because of their level of education it is assumed that the government health worker and religious leader could speak standard Indonesian, but there is little practical reason to do so.

5.2.3 Economics

The major income-generating activities are agricultural. They make coconut oil and dry fish to sell in Sarmi. They also will sell copra and swamp cabbage when there is opportunity. They all felt that it was important to know Malay in order to gain economically. There are no outside companies in the area, but several years ago there was an oil company who employed people in the area.

The people claim that there are no Masep men who have ever left the village in order to find work elsewhere.

5.2.4 Education

The nearest place the Masep can go for formal education is Karfasia, where there is an elementary school (6 years). The nearest elementary middle school (3 years) is in Arbais and high school (3 years) is in Sarmi. However, no Masep children attend school beyond six years of elementary school. They expressed a desire to have some kind of vernacular school in their village. One problem they expressed was that there is nowhere in Arbais to board their children should they want to send them to elementary middle school. The average education level of men in Masep is grade-3 (elementary school 3rd grade). For women it is less.

The Masep have made attempts to write their language and said that they do write letters to each other. They are vaguely aware of the SIL vernacular language work in Isirawa but did not express an opinion on that work. Although they expressed a desire to see

vernacular education for their children, they did not indicate an overt willingness to see it happen.

5.2.5 Religion

There is only one church in Masep, and all the people claim to be GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia), the government recognized Protestant church denomination. The leader of the church is a Masep and uses Masep in the informal parts of the service. When asked about vernacular scripture, the response was *paling senang* '(I) would like the most.'

5.2.6 Social relations

The Masep only have dealings with the two villages closest to them. They relate to Karfasia when there is a *masalah babi* 'a problem dealing with pigs'. All non-Masep wives come from Subu, and Subu is the only village that receives Masep wives. They said that Subu women who marry Masep men learn to speak Masep. Some Masep men live temporarily in Subu with their Subu wife's family.

5.2.7 Language use

All participants in all domains of life vigorously use the vernacular. The only exceptions are the use of Malay in church (songs and sermons) and in dealing with outsiders. None of the people (besides small children) seemed to be monolingual. Though bilingual, their second language was not always Malay.

5.3 Yoke

Until quite recently, the Yoke people have remained isolated, living among the mangrove and sago swamps around Lake Yoke. In 1991, urged by the government, almost all of them were resettled in the newly created village of Mantarbori where a school and medical clinic were built. Since then, over half of them have moved back to the village of Yoke. Most people are moving back and forth between the two villages. Even now, if the people of Mantarbori want to leave the village in order to get sago, they must get permission from the government via the church to do so. Many of these people seem to spend a lot of their time getting sago.

There are estimated to be not more than two hundred Yoke speakers. The village of Mantarbori has about fourteen family units (KK). The village of Yoke has about thirty family units.

The greatest need they expressed was for a government health worker.

5.3.1 Intragroup contact

There are only two Yoke villages: Mantarbori and Yoke. Mantarbori is on the coast, northwest of Sarmi, near the mouth of the Mamberamo. The village of Yoke is one day by paddled canoe from Mantarbori. Among themselves they use the Yoke language. Contact with the Warembori people is frequent, and many of the people are bilingual in these two related languages.

5.3.2 Contact with Malay

The closest towns where Malay is spoken are Sarmi and Serui. Mantarbori is about eight hours by motorized canoe from Sarmi. It is further to Serui from Mantarbori.

There are no health workers in the Yoke area, although there is a clinic in Mantarbori. There is one nonpermanent and three "permanent" teachers for the elementary school in

Mantarbori. The three permanent teachers are from Biak, Manokwari, and Yoke. All of them can speak Yoke, but the one nonpermanent teacher from Java cannot speak Yoke.

Those Yoke are able to speak Malay with outsiders, and outsiders use Malay with them. There are Makassar/Bugis villages on the north side of Lake Rombebai, and the Yoke have occasional dealings with these people.

5.3.3 Economics

The major income-generating activities of the Yoke are gathering *sirip hiu* 'shark fin', crocodile skins, bananas, sago, and clams. These items are sold in Jayapura. In the past, oil was found in the area, and some Yoke people found employment with the oil company, but the oil was never exploited. However, the pipes are still there. Currently there are no Yoke men employed in the area.

About ten Yoke men have left the area to find employment with Tinta Mas, a construction company.

Those we talked to in Mantarbori felt that being able to speak Indonesian was crucial to economic development.

5.3.4 Education

In 1992 a government elementary school was built in Mantarbori. It offers grades 1–6. There are over twenty students attending, almost all from the Yoke area.

Those that have graduated from any school return to the area, but only for a short time (claimed the interviewees). Those who begin school complete at least grade six. The teachers at the school are from Biak, Manokwari, and Yoke and are able to speak Yoke. However, a mixture of Indonesian and Malay is used in the formal education. As the teachers were not in the village when it was surveyed, their attitudes toward integrating vernacular language education could not be determined.

The people in Mantarbori have attempted to write their language and claim to do so in the form of letters. Generally, there was a positive attitude toward being involved in vernacular language development.

5.3.5 Religion

All of the Yoke people claim to be Protestant. There is only one church in the area, the GKI church. There is one *penginjil* 'religious worker' from Yoke village in Mantarbori. However, he uses mostly Malay in church with only some mixture of Yoke.

There was high interest in vernacular Scripture. They commented that the Bible in the Indonesian language is not at all clear.

5.3.6 Social relations

The Yoke people have dealings mostly with Warembori, Biak, Kurudu, and Serui. They give and take wives with people from, in order of frequency, Jayapura, Warembori, Subu, Biak, Serui, Kurudu, Bagusa, and Makassar/Bugis.

5.3.7 Language use

In the village of Mantarbori, the vernacular is used almost exclusively by adults among themselves and when speaking to children. Children, however, use Malay almost exclusively with each other, at school, and when talking with their parents. Adults speaking with outsiders use Malay exclusively. In church, the language used depends upon the religious worker, though most use a mixture of languages.

It is very likely that in the village of Yoke, in the interior, vernacular language use is even stronger with children using it.

5.4 Airoran

There were strong feelings in Subu, on the coast, that the variety of Airoran spoken there was significantly different (not better or worse) than that spoken in the interior. It didn't take much investigation to realize that the differences, if there really were any (as some of the words were obviously made up on the spot), were very minor. It was apparent that if an outside researcher came to work in the Airoran area, the people in Subu wanted them to live in Subu.

The people in Subu have a very positive attitude about their language (particularly the Subu dialect). Another survey will need to be conducted to determine where the best village/dialect would be for conducting a language project.

5.4.1 Intragroup contact

There are three Airoran villages. Subu is a recently created village on the coast at the mouth of the Apauwer River, Kapeso Apawer is on the Apauwer River (as opposed to Kapeso Rombebai on the lake) two days by paddled canoe from Subu, and Airoran (Motobiak) which is on the Apauwer River five days paddling from Subu. Other Airoran people live in hamlets scattered about the area.

Each of the villages have their own slightly different dialect, but each is mutually intelligible to the others. When they interact, each uses his or her own dialect and is understood by the others.

5.4.2 Contact with Malay

The closest town to the Airoran area where Malay is used is Sarmi. The most common way of getting to Sarmi is by walking three days. Some men will travel there as often as five times a year. The men's abilities in Malay are proficient.

There are only two outsiders in Subu. A medical worker is from Sarmi and does not speak Airoran and a religious worker is from Yoke and does not speak Airoran either. The language used with these and other transient outsiders is Malay. All women from outside, who have married into the Airoran, learn to speak Airoran, though not all speak Malay.

5.4.3 Economics

Currently, the main cash generator is dried fish, which is sold in Sarmi. They will also sell sago to places nearby. About fifteen years ago there was an oil company working in the area, and some local men found employment with the company. However, the company left, and now none of the men have employment. The people felt that it was important to know "Bahasa Malay" in order to advance economically, for it allowed one to trade and bargain with outsiders.

5.4.4 Education

There is no school in the Airoran area. The closest schools are in Mantarbori, in the Yoke area, which began in 1992 and a school in Karfasia near the county of Arbais. Both are primary schools to grade six. However, both are days away with no boarding facilities for children. Those that can attend must live with family members in Mantarbori or Karfasia. There is, in the village, a school run by the religious worker. It is an informal school and all of the children attend who are not at the primary school. It is taught in Malay by a man from Yoke.

Most of the men in Subu have a third grade education, many from the time of the Dutch (before 1960). In the village there are three people who have completed elementary middle school and one who has completed high school.

When asked if they have ever written Airoan, they said they had not, but certainly can. They have heard about the literacy programs in the Aurimi-Kwerba area and think that they are good.

5.4.5 Religion

One hundred percent of the Airoan claim to be GKI Protestants. In 1975 Fred Hurd came and lived in Subu for over a year and began to learn their language. Because of health and other problems, the Hurds left.

There is one religious leader in Subu, a religious worker from Yoke. He does not speak Airoan and leads the church in Irianese Malay. Many people spoke positively of the idea of vernacular Scripture but didn't know how that could be brought about.

5.4.6 Social relations

The people of Subu trade and get wives from the following villages: Airoan, Kapeso, Mantabori, and Masep. Subu women, however, mainly marry Subu men or other Airoan-speaking men.

5.4.7 Language use

The vernacular is used in all domains of interpersonal communication with the following exceptions: at school interaction with the Yoke teacher and between students during school hours is in Malay. Another exception is at church where the preacher is Yoke and uses Malay. The announcements, however, are in Airoan. The final exception is the use of Malay with non-Airoan-speaking outsiders.

5.5 Samarokena

Of all the language groups we surveyed, this is the only group with a history of being proactive in seeking outside help to promote their language. This is probably due to their proximity to the Isirawa and Kwerba language programs.

Since we visited only briefly on a Sunday afternoon, we were unable to evaluate first hand language vitality. We were warmly welcomed and offered kind hospitality.

5.5.1 Intragroup contact

There are four main villages in this language area. Karfasia is on the coast about halfway between Arbais and Masep. The village of Samarokena is two days by foot into the interior from Karfasia. Maniva is three days from Karfasia and is in the hills. Murara is four days from Karfasia. People from all of the foregoing villages use Samarokena when visiting each other. As there are not any reported significant dialect differences, this is not surprising.

5.5.2 Contact with Malay

Sarmi and Arbais are the closest places to Samarokena where Malay is used. They are both less than a day's travel from Karfasia and Samarokena. Men from these villages go there almost weekly. In Karfasia, the village with the most contact with Malay, there are four non-Samarokena. There is an Isirawa government health worker from Arbais who uses Isirawa, a church leader from Serui who can speak Samarokena and two teachers; one from Biak and one a Batak from Sumatra, neither of which can speak Samarokena.

With the teachers and all other non-Isirawa outsiders, Malay is used as the language of wider communication.

5.5.3 Economics

The main commodities that the Samarokena sell are coconut oil, pork, chicken, and dried fish. These are sold mostly to non-Samarokena in Arbais and Sarmi. All the Samarokena felt it was important, economically, to be able to communicate in Malay and/or Indonesian.

In the early 1980s Shell Oil was in the Samarokena area exploring for oil and employed many men. But in 1982 the company left, and now none of the men in the villages work for an outside company.

5.5.4 Education

A government elementary school was established in Karfasia in 1992. It includes grades 1–6, and all eligible children in Karfasia attend the school. There are currently four elementary middle school students from Karfasia attending school in Arbais. Those interviewed said that none of the students who go to school outside the area have returned to the village.

The average level of formal education for adult men in Karfasia is grade 3 of elementary school.

The two schoolteachers in Karfasia are from outside the area. One teacher is from Biak, and the other is a Batak from Sumatra. The people in Karfasia say they have not attempted to write the language but are positive that it could be. They are aware of the language program going on among the Isirawa and are eager to see it duplicated among themselves. All of the people said they would support any effort to bring a literacy program to the Samarokena.

5.5.5 Religion

The Samarokena say they are one hundred percent Protestant Christian. There are two church denominations in the area; GKI (Gereja Kristen Indonesia), a product of the Dutch Reformed Church, and a larger GKII (Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia), a product of CAMA. The GKI pastor is an Isirawa and does not speak or use Samarokena. The GKII pastor is from Serui and is able to speak Samarokena. The GKII pastor was very favorable to the idea of vernacular literacy. When asked about the intelligibility of the Indonesian Bible, he said that it was very unclear to the people and that they need the Bible in their own language.

5.5.6 Social relations

The people of Karfasia interact mostly with the villages of Waina (Isirawa) and Masep, both less than a day's walk away. They trade with these villages and intermarry with them. We were unable to determine what percentage of the women in Karfasia were from non-Samarokena villages.

5.5.7 Language use

Vernacular language use in Karfasia is very strong. It is used exclusively among all adults and between adults and children. Children use a mixture of the vernacular and Malay among themselves. At school, the teachers use Indonesian and expect the children to use it. Indonesian is also said to be used in church for both the sermons and announcements.

6 Status of Translation Needs

6.1 Masep

B.F. Grimes (1996) lists Masep as a Possible Need. We would suggest that it be changed to Definite Need. Language use is vigorous, and although they are a small group, they are holding on to their language with tenacity. They stated that they do not understand the Indonesian Bible, and would like to see the Bible in Masep.

6.2 Yoke

B.F. Grimes (1996) lists Yoke as a Possible Need. We would suggest that its status be changed to Definite Need. Language use is vigorous, and their contact with the national language is very limited. The people in Mantarbori said that they do not understand the Indonesian Bible, and it would stand to reason that the majority of the language group, who live in the interior, would understand it less.

6.3 Airoran

B.F. Grimes (1996) lists Airoran as a Possible Need. This status should be changed to Definite Need for the following reasons: Language use is very strong. Their previous contact with an outsider learning the language was very positive. There are many people who are eager to help if they knew how. The people live very far from any contact with the national language and will not, in the near (nor probably far) future, be proficient enough in Bahasa Indonesian to understand the Indonesian Scriptures.

6.4 Samarokena

B.F. Grimes (1996) lists Samarokena as a Definite Need. For many years the Samarokena have been asking for someone to translate the Bible into their language. Their enthusiasm for this has not seemed to have waned. Some thought was given as to whether they could use the Isirawa Scriptures. There seem to be many people who understand Isirawa, but the level of intelligibility of current Isirawa Scriptures is undetermined. Because of the low level of cognate similarity and the level of intelligibility needed to understand Scripture, it is doubtful that Isirawa Scriptures will suffice. Further investigation will need to be done.

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