FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ELABORATION OF BAURE TEACHING MATERIALS

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1.1 Introduction: Baure languages

Genetic affiliation

- Arawakan languages, southern branch (Aikhenvald 1999: 65-71)
- closely related to the Mojo languages, and to Terêna and Paunaka
- Baure language group: Baure, Carmelito and Joaquiniano (Danielsen and Terhart *in press*)
1.1 Introduction: Baure languages

Baure speakers
- critically/severely endangered language (Kraus 2007, ELCat)
- total number of speakers: 59
- all speakers are elderly, transmission has been interrupted since 1950s

Language status
- recognized in the constitution as an official language (36 indigenous languages), and schools are encouraged to teach local languages
- growing awareness of the potential loss, several community based initiatives for revitalization (schools, indigenous organizations)
The Documentation of Baure: A Language of the Bolivian Amazonia

- funded by the DoBeS program (Volkswagen Foundation)
- core research team
  - Dr. Swintha Danielsen (Linguistics - typology)
  - Dr. Franziska Riedel (Ethnology)
  - Femmy Admiraal, MA (Linguistics - typology)
1.3 Introduction: Baure teaching materials

*Shi vikarow to vekori - Libro de enseñanza del idioma baure*
- funded by the Foundation for Endangered Languages and the Alice Cozzi Heritage Language Foundation
- team of volunteers
  - Julián Imanareico (Local teacher - Baures)
  - Gilmar Vidal (Local teacher - El Carmen)
  - Katja Leichsnering (Educational Sciences)
  - Frank Landsbergen (Illustrations)
  - Hans-Albrecht Günther (Layout)

*Bilingual memory game Baure - Spanish*
- funded by the Endangered Language Fund
2.1 Baure teaching materials: course book

Original idea

- combine existing teaching materials into a coherent Baure course
2.1 Baure teaching materials: course book

End product
- exercise book
  - 11 chapters and 2 repasos
  - central theme: story of frog and lizard
  - grammar: pronouns, nouns, verbs, numerals
  - basic vocabulary thematically listed
    (kinship terms, body parts, food, animals, natural surroundings, domestic utensils)

- teacher’s manual
  - part I: answers to exercises, suggestions for classroom activities, homework sheets
  - part II: elaborate description of grammar
  - audio CD with exercises and story

(Admiraal 2012)
2.2 Bilingual memory game

Bilingual memory game
- 35 pairs of matching cards
- pictures based on children’s drawings
- each pair has a Baure and Spanish word
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2.3 Teacher training

Workshop
- 80 teachers from primary and secondary schools in Baures
- two sessions of half a day each
- first session: teachers are learners
- in between: homework assignment
- second session: teachers teaching
3.1 Evaluation: successes

Successes

- memory game encouraged children to learn vocabulary
- speakers are proud of the book
- contributes to already growing awareness of potential language loss (e.g. commercials on local radio, local authorities financially support development of more teaching materials)
3.2 Evaluation: shortcomings

Shortcomings

- too little involvement of teachers in the elaboration of content
- materials are very demanding for the teachers (2-day workshop not nearly enough)
- audio CD: more audio materials needed and of better quality
3.3 Evaluation: undesirable side effects

Undesirable side effects

- inevitable loss of complexity of the language in teaching and learning process
- Baure materials will be used in El Carmen and San Joaquín as well (maybe even in towns where Itonama and Mojo languages was/are spoken?)
- language materials are the only proper teaching materials available to teachers
4.1 Discussion: A field linguist’s task?

A field linguist’s task?

➤ applications and ethic guidelines

“The parties will support efforts for revitalizing the languages within the limits of their possibilities”

➤ limited time and financial resources
➤ language materials for community is not main goal
A field linguist’s expertise?

- data collection/selection: data collected for documentation is very different from data used in teaching materials or revitalization programs
- elaboration of content: no training in educational sciences, limited training in second language learning
- implementation: inadequate teacher training is one of the main causes for the failure of teaching programs for endangered languages (Hinton 2001)
4.3 Discussion: collaboration

Seek collaboration with ...

- community
  - what kind of materials does the community wish for and how do they define the need for it?
  - are there any local initiatives for language revitalization and what is their motivation?
  - does the language have an official status and what does this imply?

- anthropologists
- specialists from educational sciences
- sociolinguists
- specialists in language acquisition
5. Conclusions

- Giving community members access to archived materials does not necessarily serve them in revitalizing an endangered language.

- Think bottom up: what does the community wish, expect, need, and how can the descriptive data form a basis to help them reach their goal, or how does it need to be processes in order to contribute.

- Learn from best practices of other revitalization projects and share your own experiences (good and bad).
I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the Baure speakers, and thank them for their efforts and patience, and their willingness to share their knowledge with us.

Asoropaiy, thank you.
References


Examples from the Baure book

- complex verbal morphology

(1) Nborimbekinopashapir=nish.
   $ni=pori-mbe-ko-ino-pa-sha=pi=ro=nish$
   $1SG=sew-CLF:flat-ABS-BEN-INTL-IRR=2SG=3SGm=EXCL$
   “Well, when I am going to mend it for you.”

- competing constructions

(2a) Paripoewani-ye.
    $pari-poewani-ye$
    house-next.to-LOC
    “Next to the house.”

(2b) Ropoewani-ye to pari.
    $ro=poewani-ye$ to pari
    $3SGm=next.to-LOC$ ART house
    “Next to the house.”
2.2 Developing materials: elaboration of content

Examples from the Baure book

- Language capacity of teachers: teachers are learners themselves

Course book:

Teacher’s manual:

En el idioma baure se clasifica a los parientes de manera distinta al castellano. Es decir, para algunos familiares hay dos palabras en el castellano pero solamente una palabra en el idioma baure, y para algunos familiares hay una sola palabra en el castellano y dos palabras en el idioma baure. Por ejemplo, nij se usa para referirse a un nieto o una nieta, y nicha’ se usa para referirse a un tocayo o una tocaya. La palabra para un hermano o una hermana depende del sexo de la persona que está hablando. La persona que está hablando se refiere a un hermano/hermana del mismo sexo con la palabra nipiri. Es decir, una mujer dice a su hermana nipiri, ‘mi hermana’, y un hombre dice a su hermano nipiri, ‘mi hermano’. Una mujer dice a su hermano ni’aiy, ‘mi hermano’ y un hombre dice a su hermana net, ‘mi hermana’. Además, hay una palabra más general, nichon, ‘mi hermano/hermana’ que se usa para hermanos de ambos sexos. En la lista del vocabulario en el libro de estudiantes se especifica si la palabra tiene dos traducciones o si se refiere a una persona de cierto sexo.
2.2 Developing materials: elaboration of content

Examples from the Baure book

- teaching Baure numerals

(3a) *Ponosh jir.*
   
   po-no-sh  jir
   one-CLF:general-one man
   "One man."

(3b) *Apin jir.*

   api-no  jir
   two-CLF:general man
   "Two men."

(3c) *Mbon jir.*

   mbo-no  jir
   three-CLF:general man
   "Three men."

(4a) *Popish kiwor.*

   po-pi-sh  kiwor
   one-CLF:long&thin-one snake
   "One snake."

(4b) *Apipi kiwor.*

   api-pi  kiwor
   two-CLF:long&thin snake
   "Two snakes."

(4c) *Mbopi kiwor.*

   mbo-pi  kiwor
   three-CLF:long&thin snake
   "Three snakes."