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The Impact of Immigrants on Language Vitality: A case study of Awar and Kayan

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Abstract

The Awar [aya] and Kayan [kct] ethnolinguistic groups share linguistically related languages. These groups are similar in size, around 1,000 individuals each, and they live in close proximity. However, the vitality of these two languages is completely different. The Kayan language is incredibly vital and is in active use by all generations. In contrast, there are almost no Awar children who can understand the language when it is spoken to them, while most adults are unable to speak the language in conversation. It is only the oldest Awar that can still use the language actively.

The only significant difference between these two groups is the makeup of their immigrant populations and, possibly, the historical size of those immigrant populations. The Kayan have an immigrant population mostly from surrounding groups. The Awar, however, at one time may have had a large immigrants serving on plantations in their area, and even now that the plantations are closed and many labourers have left, there is still a remnant of immigrants that come from all over Papua New Guinea.

The vitality of oral languages can be tenuous and it is affected by many factors. The case of Awar and Kayan shows one of those factors to be the size and makeup of the immigrant population.

1. Introduction

The Awar [aya] and Kayan [kct]¹ are two relatively small language groups located near the mouth of the Ramu River in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG). In October 2013 I visited Kayan, the only village where the Kayan language is spoken, and the three villages whose populations make up the Awar language group; Awar, Nubia, and Sisimagum.² As a researcher, I was struck by how different the situations were. In the Awar communities children ran around speaking nothing but Tok Pisin [tɪpi], the language of wider communication for PNG. By contrast in Kayan I met children starting school who did not yet know Tok Pisin, in my experience a rare thing in PNG. These two communities are only ten kilometres apart, connected by a road with high levels of traffic, they are about the same size, and have a similar number of immigrants. This paper will explore how the current makeup of immigrants and possibly the size of past immigrant populations may have started the Awar on the path to language shift.

¹ ISO codes for languages will be given only at the first occurrence in this paper.

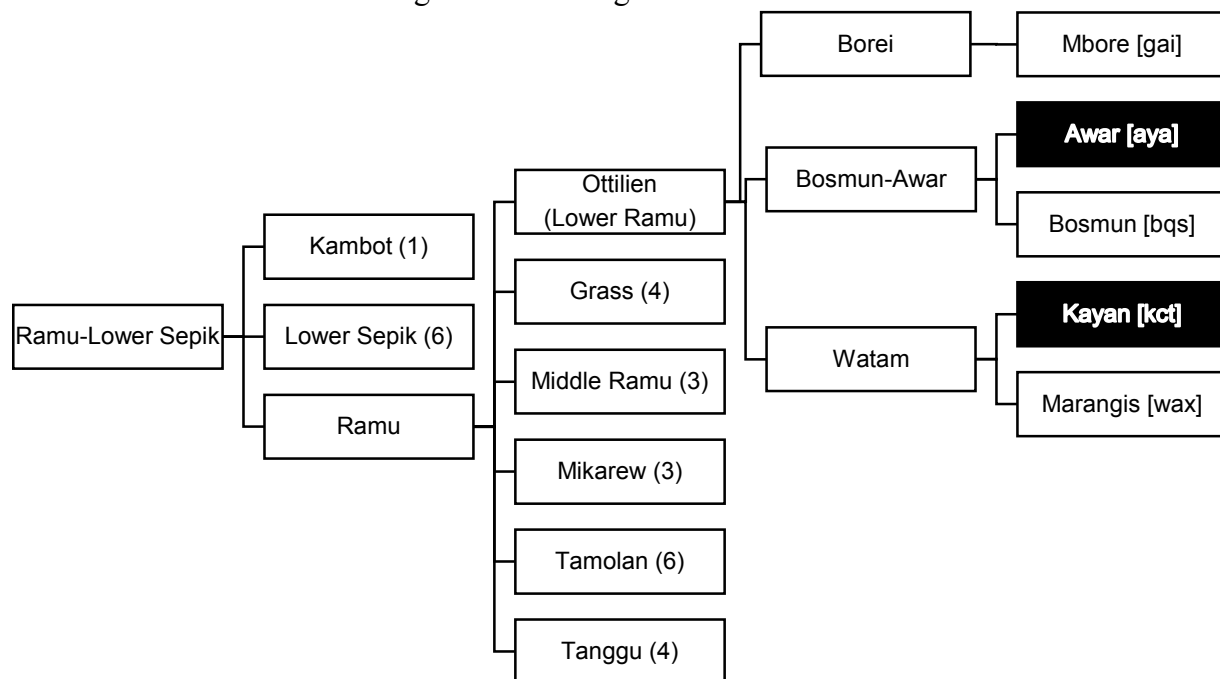
² I was able to return to Kayan in September 2014.

2. Comparing Awar and Kayan

The value of this case study is that Awar and Kayan are comparable in many key areas related to language vitality. It is almost possible to isolate the factor that represents the difference between the two communities to explain the vast difference in their vitality.

First, I will examine some these similarities. Awar and Kayan are related languages spoken by comparable populations (1,153 people live in the Awar villages and 792 in Kayan). They are two of the five Otilien languages. The Ethnologue classification can be charted as follows (Lewis, 2009).

Figure 1: Ethnologue Classification³



Number in parenthesis () indicates number of languages in the group

Next, the similar location of the language groups gives them access to the same resources. Like most rural Papua New Guineas, the residents of Awar and Kayan are subsistence farmers cultivating small plots of land to meet their basic dietary needs. Many are also involved in small

³ Foley argues for a slightly different grouping of the larger Ramu-Lower Sepik family, but is in agreement with Figure 1 where it concerns the Otilien sub-group languages. He has suggested changing the sub-group name to “Lower Ramu” as it is more easily understood (Foley, 2005). In this work I will follow Foley’s suggestion and use “Lower Ramu” to refer to the language sub-group.

scale cash crop ventures, usually copra or cocoa. There are no mines in the area and currently no logging operations.

There is a road that runs from Madang (the closest urban centre) to Kayan where the road ends. Before reaching Kayan it goes through all three Awar villages. Road access grants both communities similar economic opportunities and contact with other ethnolinguistic groups.

In the area of institutions, church and school are both done in Tok Pisin in the Lower Ramu area. This remains true in both Awar and Kayan.⁴ There are Catholic churches in Kayan and Awar village. These churches are home to congregations that include people from multiple language groups who come from many villages (mainly Mbore [gai] speakers in both). There are also primary schools in Kayan and Sisimagum. Like church, children come from many villages speaking more than one language. The cultural value of inclusion demands that church be done in Tok Pisin so that everyone can understand. School policy states that children must speak in English on the school grounds in both Kayan and Sisimagum, though in Kayan the headmaster admits, “Kayan is too strong and overcomes this rule.”⁵

Finally, both languages have the same level of government support, which practically speaking is none. The government of PNG recognizes all the vernacular languages spoken within its borders but does not have the resources to provide actual support to most of them. Like the other factors discussed, this is exactly the same for both the Awar and the Kayan.

3. Vitality of Awar and Kayan⁶

Now I will analyse the most noticeable difference between the two ethnolinguistic groups, the vitality of their respective languages. To compare the vitality of Awar and Kayan I will use the theoretical framework of the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis and Simons 2010a). The reason for this is the simplicity of the EGIDS scale. Although there are any number of factors involved in the complex sociolinguistic situation of language shift, the ultimate cause is a breakdown in passing the vernacular from one generation to the next.

The scale is numeric with a short description for each level. Both Awar and Kayan fall between 6a and 8a on the scale (see Table 1 for a description of each level).

⁴ Except announcements in church, which are usually done in the Kayan language in Kayan village. In Awar, announcements are done in Tok Pisin which is an indicator of the vitality of Awar, not of the language policy of the church.

⁵ “Kayan em i strongpela tumas na em i winim dispela lo.” Most of my interviews were conducted in Tok Pisin. For the sake of English readers, I will provide the English translations in the text and the actual response in Tok Pisin in a footnote.

⁶ For a full description of the language vitality of Kayan, Awar, and the other Lower Ramu languages see (Paris, Forthcoming)

Table 1: EGIDS levels 6a to 8a (Lewis and Simons 2010a, 110)

Level	Name	Description
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language. This level is considered to be a sustainable situation for continued oral use of the language.
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.

Level 6a is a sustainable situation. In a community where all parents teach all children to speak their vernacular, that language is safe for at least a generation (Lewis and Simons 2010b, 12). This pattern can continue indefinitely, until something changes, therefore making the language orally sustainable. Once a community moves to level 6b the situation loses its sustainability. When adults stop teaching the children to speak the vernacular these children start using other languages to fill the gaps in domain use left by the vernacular. When they are grown, those children will obviously not pass what they do not know on to their own children; they will pass on the languages they have been using to replace the vernacular. In this way, generations slowly stop using the vernacular until the community moves to Level 7 where no children speak it and then to Level 8a where only grandparents actively use it.

In many parts of Madang Province language groups are shifting from their vernacular to Tok Pisin, a creole language that is one of the official languages of Papua New Guinea. It is the language of town, education, and business, especially in Madang town. English [eng] is also a language that puts pressure on the vernaculars of Madang Province. Though it is not spoken by many people it is the language of higher education and more influential business. Many people hope their children will learn English so they will have more opportunities.

Vitality of Kayan

Using this framework it is quite easy to place Kayan at Level 6a. All children in the community learn Kayan before they learn another language. I interacted with a Kayan child around seven or eight years old who stumbled over a Tok Pisin word. Some older children mocked him and then explained to me that this child was just starting to learn Tok Pisin. The Kayan feel that it is the parents' responsibility to teach their children Kayan and the school's responsibility to teach Tok Pisin and English.⁷ Since this child had only just started school he was only just beginning to learn Tok Pisin. These factors create an environment where Kayan children use Kayan with all other members of the community, including other children.

In walking around Kayan I was surprised by the lack of Tok Pisin I heard. I walked around the village alone for about an hour at dusk. In that setting it is easy to move in a village and not be noticed. Families are preparing the evening meal, children are playing, men are gathering to discuss the day's events and plans for the next. During that hour I did not hear a single Tok Pisin word other than what was directed to me.

During the 5 days I have been in Kayan, I have never heard an adult address a child in Tok Pisin except when I was a part of the conversation. This confirms the reports that the community uses the Kayan language to socialize their children.

Finally, the Kayan reported that the community at large uses Kayan in every domain. During a village gathering all of my questions, which were posed in Tok Pisin, were translated into and then discussed in Kayan before a spokesman gave me the group answer in Tok Pisin. Most interactions I witnessed between adults were in Kayan. All of this makes the impression that Kayan is a sustainable oral language. This means that unless something drastic changes, the language will be spoken as the primary language of the residents of Kayan for the next few generations at least.

Vitality of Awar

The situation in Awar is slightly more complex. The three Awar communities reported that all their children learn Tok Pisin before their vernacular. They also reported that only a few children go on to learn Awar. One man even called Tok Pisin, "the new vernacular."⁸ For this reason all interactions the people have with their children are exclusively in Tok Pisin. As one woman in Sisimagum put it, "if you want to teach them [our children] something, you have to use Tok Pisin."⁹

⁷ "Lainim ol pikinini tok ples, em i wok bilong ol papamama. Lainim ol Tok Pisin na English, em i wok bilong skul tasol."

⁸ "Em i nupela tok ples."

⁹ "Sapos yu laik lainim ol sampela samting, yu mas yusim tok pisin tasol."

I was able to confirm this through observation. In the four days I visited these communities I never heard someone younger than middle age use Awar and only the grandparent generation were able to use Awar more than Tok Pisin in a conversation. An older man in Nubia reported that he is able to use Awar with members of the parent generation, but they all respond with Tok Pisin.¹⁰

In one instance, the council member for Awar was walking up and down the street announcing that a village wide meeting was about to begin. I heard him using Tok Pisin and asked his assistant why he didn't use Awar. He responded, "He wants everyone to understand what he is saying and come. If he used Awar many people would not understand and would not come."¹¹

None of the children are fluent in Awar. Parents primarily use Tok Pisin when communicating with their children. Finally, the community at large rarely uses Awar in any domain. The ability to hear and speak the language still resides in most of the grandparent generation and some of the parent generation, but regular use of the language has died out.

This places Awar somewhere between EGIDS Level 7 and 8a. In a fuller report on the vitality of all Lower Ramu languages, I have assigned Awar at Level 7, but that can only remain true for the next few years (Paris, Forthcoming). Currently there is no effort visible in the community to teach members of the parent generation or their children the Awar language. If this remains the case, Awar will be at Level 8a in a decade and from there slowly move into total loss as the final speakers die.

Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

To more thoroughly compare the sociolinguistic situations of Awar and Kayan, I will use Landweer's Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (IEV). Landweer developed the IEV specifically for the sociolinguistic environment unique to Melanesia.¹² Early attempts to understand and codify language shift focused mainly on the European and North American contexts (see (Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal, 1981), (Fishman, 1991), and (Yamamoto, 1998)). Landweer's work is the first attempt to understand language shift in the Melanesian context. She originally published the IEV as her dissertation and her latest version appears in the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* ((Landweer, 2006) and (Landweer, 2012)).

The IEV consists of eight different indicators:

1. Potential for contact
2. Domains of language use
3. Frequency and type of code switching
4. Population and group dynamics (immigrant language use patterns)

¹⁰ "Mi ken yusim tok ples long ol, tasol ol i bekim long tok pisin."

¹¹ "Em i laik olgeta harim na kam. Sapos em i yusim tok ples planti manmeri i no harim na ol i no kam."

¹² For a brief description of the sociolinguistic environment of Melanesia see (Landweer & Unseth, 2012)

5. Social networks
6. Social outlook
7. Language prestige
8. Economic influences

Each indicator has four levels, 3 to 0, with level 3 considered to be an attribute of a relatively strong ethnolinguistic community and 0 that of a weak one (see (Landweer, 2012) for a full description of each indicator and its levels).

IEV Comparison

The first indicator assesses the potential for contact. Awar and Kayan are almost identical in this respect in that both communities have easy road access to the closest urban centre, Madang town. The North Coast road runs from Madang to its terminus at the Botbot River, which also serves as the western border of Kayan village. The three Awar villages lie only ten kilometres east of Kayan on the same road. Residents of Kayan and all three Awar villages can travel to and from Madang using Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs) for PGK25.¹³ PMVs usually run both directions every day except for Sundays.

Using the IEV's levels, both Awar and Kayan rate at a 1, "fairly easy access to and from the nearest urban (or population) center" (Landweer, 2012, p. 164). The only level lower on the scale places the language communities in the urban centre. The potential for contact is considerable in both communities and is a negative influence on the vitality of both languages. However, it is mitigated in Kayan by other factors.

Indicator seven, language prestige, shows us that both Awar and Kayan have a neutral status in the region. Neither are used as a language of wider communication (LWC) in the region, or in church, education, or trade. It is also true of both languages that they are not disparaged in the region. Both are neutral and as such score a 1 on the IEV.

Since the IEV is a tool to measure the current vitality of an ethnolinguistic group, these are the only two indicators where Kayan and Awar score the same. In fact all of the other scores show just how vast the gap between current vitality of the languages is:

- Indicator 2 (Domains of language use); Kayan 3, Awar 0
- Indicator 3 (Frequency and type of code switching); Kayan 2, Awar 0
- Indicator 4 (Population and group dynamics); Kayan 3, Awar 1
- Indicator 5 (Social networks); Kayan 3, Awar 1
- Indicator 6 (Social outlook); Kayan 2, Awar 0
- Indicator 8 (Economic influences); Kayan 2, Awar 1

¹³ About US\$10.25 at the current exchange rate of PGK 1=USD 0.40. PGK is the currency designator for the Papua New Guinean Kina.

Given this vast difference in scores we would be tempted to say these languages are not comparable at all. However, all of the above indicators are influenced by the current vitality of the language. Only indicators 1 and 7 describe the context in which the target language is spoken and are not affected by the actual vitality of the target language. Therefore, they are the only indicators where we would expect Awar and Kayan to score the same. It is also expected that two languages which are at the extreme ends of oral vitality would score differently on the other indicators.

Presumably there was a time when Awar was a vital language. When it was used in all domains (Indicator 2); when the Awar used their language in a stable multilingual environment (Indicator 3); when all immigrants in the area learned Awar (Indicator 4); when Awar speakers used the Awar language in dense, multiplex social networks that met their needs (Indicator 5); when there was a strong internal identity (Indicator 6); and when Awar speakers were able to meet their economic needs in a way that did not force language shift (Indicator 8). Assuming such a time existed and Awar and Kayan were scored on the IEV, there would have been no difference between them.

The question then is, what changed? What influence overtook the vitality of Awar and was either not felt in Kayan or overcome there?

4. Immigrants¹⁴

Immigration is not new to PNG. Long before the arrival of the first Europeans, the small ethnolinguistic groups of Madang Province were in the habit of finding potential mates in other ethnolinguistic groups. Due to the difficult terrain, most immigrants came from groups that were geographically close. In the past, at least when Awar was a vital language, almost all immigrants came from other villages in the Sepik-Ramu area. The same is of course true in Kayan, most immigrants came from the local area.

This changed in the late 1800s when the German New Guinea Company created the first copra plantation in the area, the Potsdam Plantation. This was not in the Awar area, but just a few kilometres southeast. Certainly close enough to impact the sociolinguistic situation of Awar (but probably not close enough to impact Kayan since there was no road at the time). The men and women who came to work this plantation did not learn Awar, but instead brought Tok Pisin. Not the current form of Tok Pisin, but the pidgin ancestor to the modern creole language. It was on plantations like this one that Tok Pisin was born and developed (Romaine, 1992, p. 42). It is likely these people first introduced and taught the Awar their version of Tok Pisin as they interacted with them. These were immigrants from all over PNG, hence the need for a common pidgin language.

¹⁴ In this paper I am using the term “immigrant” to refer to people who have come to live in one ethnolinguistic group from another. This excludes people who move from one village to another within the same group.

Later in the 1950s and 60s, the Catholic Church started a plantation in Awar village and another in Nubia. These two new plantations brought in workers from all over PNG right into the Awar territory. Before this new kind of immigrant interacted with the Awar, but from a slight distance. Now these new immigrants were moving into their villages.

Unfortunately, we will never have access to the historical numbers of immigrants in the Awar villages or Kayan since this is not a part of the national census. We can only look at today. Table 2 compares the immigrant population with the overall population in the four target villages. During my time in these villages I personally visited every house and counted the immigrants who lived in each village. (See Table 3 for an explanation of the estimated 2013 populations).

Table 2: Immigration Figures

Village Name	Estimated 2013 population	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of population
Awar	601	30	5.0%
Nubia	317	32	10.1%
Sisimagum	235	26	11.1%
Total	1153	88	7.6%
Kayan	792	55	6.9%

Looking at Nubia and Sisimagum we see rather large immigrant populations. However, Awar village itself has a relatively small population of immigrants which averages the total Awar immigration to something more reasonable. In Nubia only three immigrants reported that their children were able to understand Awar at all, only two in Sisimagum, and eight in Awar. The most likely explanation for why immigrant children in Awar village are more likely to understand Awar than in the other villages is that immigrants are a much smaller portion of the overall population. This is a specific example of what I felt, that the Awar language is most vital in Awar village.

Even though the immigrant population is comparatively large in Nubia and Sisimagum, the overall population of immigrants in Awar is comparable to the immigrant population in Kayan. Just like Awar village, Kayan's immigrant population is not negligible, but it is also not overwhelming. Meaning the language use of immigrants has an impact on the overall language vitality of these groups.

Table 3 gives population figures for the four target villages. The projected 2013 population figures were calculated by using the published 3.7% growth rate for Madang Province (National Statistical Office, 2002b)¹⁵. I visited the households individually and counted them in each village. Finally the estimated 2013 population is based on 5.46 persons per household found

¹⁵ "All growth rates should be used with caution due to changes in how censuses have been conducted since 1980" (National Statistical Office, 2002b, p. 9).

in Yawar Rural Local Level Government (LLG) in the 2000 census (National Statistical Office, 2002a).¹⁶

Table 3: Population Figures

Village Name	2000 National Populations Census*	Projected 2013 population	Actual Households 2013	Estimated 2013 population
Awar	444	712	110	601
Nubia	386	619	58	317
Sisimagum	160	256	43	235
Totals	990	1587	211	1153
Kayan	512	821	145	792

*These figures come from the 2000 National Census (National Statistical Office, 2002a)¹⁷

The only shocking piece of information in this chart is the fact that the overall population of Nubia village actually went down by 69 in the 13 years between the 2000 National Census and my visit there in 2013. What happened to these people? The populations of Awar and Sisimagum both grew at healthy rates, close to what was projected. We can see that there wasn't a mass movement from Nubia into Awar or Sisimagum since their populations didn't spike. One possible explanation is that a large number of immigrants left Nubia after the Nubia Plantation closed.

Though we cannot know the exact number of immigrants that were there, we do have anecdotal evidence that in the past there were many immigrants in all three Awar villages, at least more than there are now. One local government leader told me, "Our villages were filled with people from many areas."¹⁸ In contrast, the people of Kayan do not think that they had more immigrants in the past.

Unfortunately, the hard data only shows us that the current immigrant populations of the Awar villages and Kayan are actually comparable. However, there is another way of looking at immigration. Specifically, where do the current immigrants come from?

The disparity between these two immigrant populations begins to become apparent when we use the categories the Awar themselves have linguistically.

¹⁶ Though there has been a census completed by the Papua New Guinean government in 2010 the results are not yet widely distributed.

¹⁷ The results from the national 2010 census are not yet widely available.

¹⁸ "Ol ples i pulap long manmeri i kam long planti hap."

“There is a word in Awar to designate an in-law within Awar speakers, and another word to designate in-laws within the Sepik-Ramu area, but there is no word to designate an in-law from anywhere else.” (Levy, 2005, p. 82)

For the Awar your in-laws were either other Awar speakers or from the Sepik-Ramu (local area). There is no way to refer to in-laws from outside the area. Therefore, we can look at immigrants as either from the Sepik-Ramu area or not. In Kayan only five immigrants come from outside the Sepik-Ramu basin (or 0.6% of the total population). While 34 immigrants (2.9%) in Awar are from outside the Sepik-Ramu basin, meaning there is no word to describe them in the Awar language.

Finally, we can look at the language background of these immigrants. In Kayan only 29 of the 55 immigrants come from unrelated languages. Of the 88 total immigrants in the Awar villages, 72 come groups speaking unrelated languages, or 6.2% of the total population. That is to say six people out of 100 have to learn Awar as a totally foreign language. These immigrants can either learn Awar or use Tok Pisin, a language most people understand already.

Immigrant Language Use in Kayan

Of all 55 immigrants in Kayan, only three report that their children are not able to speak Kayan. One of the three reports that even though the child is unable to speak the language, he can understand it when spoken to him. His parents feel it is only a matter of time before he is speaking it as well.

The people of Kayan report that they try to teach every outsider their language, in fact they see it as their duty.¹⁹ I asked what they think when people come live with them and do not learn their language. They didn't answer the question because they couldn't think of anyone who had done this. The fact that the Kayan believe strongly enough in the idea that everyone who lives with them should learn their language that they actively teach outsiders when they arrive puts a lot of cultural pressure on immigrants to learn Kayan and use it with their children.

Almost half of the immigrant women come from the neighbouring Lower Ramu language, Mbore [gai]. By speaking a neighbouring language, these women are already halfway to learning the Kayan language. They also bring with them a unique identity. After visiting Awar and Kayan, I also visited the Bosmun [bqs] language group. In terms of language vitality, the Bosmun fall directly between Kayan and Awar. In looking at immigrant language use, there are only eight immigrant families in all five Bosmun villages where the children are fluent in Bosmun. In all eight families the immigrant mother is Mbore. I didn't notice the pattern until the last village, where I asked an immigrant mother from Mbore about it. She said, “We are Mbore. Mbore know the vernacular of the area.”²⁰ This means that when an Mbore moves to a new area, part of their

¹⁹ “Mipela lainim ol long tok ples” (we teach them our language); “Ol i mas lainim tok ples” (they need to learn our language).

²⁰ “Mipela Mbore. Ol Mbore save long tok ples bilong graun.”

Mbore identity is compelling them to learn the local language. In Bosmun, this is just an exception produced by the view of the Mbore toward all vernacular languages. The majority of immigrant children do not know Bosmun at all.

However, this same identity, that Mbore know the vernacular, when applied in Kayan only further strengthens the language. Here it is not an exception, but further evidence of the rule: if you live in Kayan, you speak Kayan.

Immigrant Language Use in Awar

The current language use of immigrants in Awar is not so telling. Almost all children, regardless of parentage, are not actively using Awar. Many parents themselves, both immigrants and locals are not using Awar either. The vitality of Awar is almost beyond the point of an immigrant being able to learn Awar even if he or she actively tried. There are just too few opportunities to speak it.

However, we can imagine a time when the first flood of immigrants came to the area with the Potsdam Plantation. These immigrants probably lived on the plantation itself so their influence was not felt as strongly as later when new plantations opened in the Awar territory. The immigrants in Potsdam interacted with Awar adults in a market setting. The people of Awar who did not know Tok Pisin probably learned it only as a means of trading with this new group. It was no great threat to a vital language where the children were still using Awar actively.

It was the immigrants who later came to work in the Nubia and Awar plantations and lived in those villages that had the real impact. It was at this time that immigrants from all over PNG lived among the Awar and later married the Awar. It is probable that only a small portion of them and their children did not learn Awar at first, but as a few generations passed that number grew as fewer and fewer immigrants learned Awar until now, when almost no children know enough Awar to understand it when spoken to them.

This type of history demonstrates how the breakdown of the generational teaching of a vernacular can take place. In this instance by the introduction of an immigrant population that was unwilling or unable to learn the vernacular into a population that was willing to allow it. The theory of intergenerational disruption is the backbone of Lewis and Simons' Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis and Simons 2010a).

5. Conclusion

If this reconstructed history is correct, the only significant difference between the Awar and Kayan language groups is their immigrant populations. In Kayan, almost all immigrants came from groups that have an established relationship with the Kayan people, places where women have come to marry Kayan men for generations. The immigrants of Awar, however, came from all over PNG. Instead of finding themselves surrounded by a related language they could almost understand inherently, as was found by the Kayan immigrants, these people were far from home surrounded by a language that was as foreign to them as Swahili would have been.

Instead of learning this new language they used Tok Pisin without finding resistance from the local community. As the group using only Tok Pisin grew, the vitality of Awar diminished.

This case study successfully defends Landweer's inclusion of the language use of immigrants as an indicator in her IEV. It also demonstrates how a small breakdown in intergenerational teaching of a vernacular can grow into total language shift adding to the research behind the theory of EGIDS.

Finally, we see that even languages that are geographically close to each other and have similar influences on their sociolinguistic environment can respond in completely different ways. This shows that even one difference, in this case the language use of immigrants, can be the decisive stimulus that starts a language group on the road toward language shift.

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