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RAPID APPRAISAL:
STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY
AS APPLIED IN CAMEROON

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There are over one hundred languages in Cameroon where little is known about the sociolinguistic situation. Rapid Appraisal (RA) was introduced and developed in order to gain an overall view in a short period of time. Although RA only scratches the surface, all relevant factors of a sociolinguistic situation are taken into consideration. The results of a RA survey not only give a good basis for determining what further surveys have to be carried out, but by its nature it is also a good tool for training new surveyors, since it touches on all the essential aspects of a language situation. It could also be used as a framework for language teams for their ongoing evaluation of their sociolinguistic situation. (This would involve long-term observation as opposed to the Rapid Appraisal approach of direct questioning). The emphasis in this paper is given to the description of the methodology as a practical tool.

Summary:

1. Purpose
 2. Strategy
 3. Methodology
 4. Field experience
 5. Conclusion
- References

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to:

- complement Ted Bergman's paper on Rapid Appraisal (cf. Bergman 1991)
- provide a detailed description of the strategy and methodology as applied in SIL's Cameroon/Chad Branch (see sections 2 and 3) in order to give some help for potential field application
- evaluate the application of Rapid Appraisal (RA), and draw conclusions (see section 4 and 5)

Experience is based on a pilot survey done in July 1991 as well as about 20 surveys carried out from January to May 1992.

2. Strategy

2.1. General objectives of sociolinguistic surveys in the context of SIL

- Evaluation of Bible translation needs according to sociolinguistic criteria: (cf. Rensch 1992:3)
 - dialect intelligibility -- intelligibility among linguistically related varieties of a language
 - bilingualism -- proficiency of speakers of vernacular languages in a second language or in a distinct standard dialect
 - language use -- distribution of languages (and dialects) in daily life in the ethnic

- community
 - language attitudes -- attitudes toward the vernacular language and other languages spoken in the community
- Evaluation of translation needs as expressed by the local churches (direct contact with possible local churches). Are churches currently making use of the vernacular?
- Inquiries in view of a potential translation project, e.g. information required for the choice of the standard reference dialect
- Inquiries in view of a potential literacy program, e.g. what type of literacy project is possible/likely to succeed, who should be addressed in a literacy program?
- Inquiries for other missions, organisations.

2.2. Basic strategy and specific objectives of a Rapid Appraisal survey

Since different agencies may require for their purposes different depths of inquiry, and in order to be economical, surveys are carried out on different levels (cf. Bendor-Samuel 1989).

Rapid Appraisal surveys are first inquiries which aim at gaining an overall view in a short time. Target languages are above all the "possible translation needs," i.e. languages where, because of lack of information, the Bible translation needs have not yet been determined. But it is also a good tool for reevaluating language situations which were surveyed years before and therefore need a confirmation of their translation status. RA should provide the basis for strategic planning on the international and branch levels. Although in most cases it may not be possible to conclude whether or not a language definitely ought to have a language team assigned to it, in each case the language should be given a preliminary assessment to the effect that development need is probable or unlikely. None should be left in the "possible" category although there may be exceptions.

As a general rule, Rapid Appraisal surveys provide the basis for further surveys, although in some cases further preallocation surveys may not even be needed.

3. Methodology

The main features of an RA survey and the basic content/layout of a complete interview are presented below:

3.1. Main features

3.1.1. Preparation phase: Preliminary studies, e.g. library research and, if possible, contact with language speakers should be carried out as thoroughly as possible as in any survey.

3.1.2. Field trip: These preliminary studies are completed by data gathering on the field which consists of group interviews and additional individual interviews. (If word lists are not available, they should be elicited in the context of the RA survey.) The interviews are carried out by means of questionnaires (the interviewer fills out the questionnaire). These interviews take a minimum amount of time, and the relatively simple method allows evaluation to be done on the field (including tallying the individual questionnaires). If necessary, i.e. if the situation is not clear, more data might be collected. The field trip is only complete when a clear idea of the situation is in mind, i.e. that there is an unlikely, a probable or even a definite need, which makes report-writing and decision-making back home easier.

3.1.3. Sampling: In order to corroborate the findings within each area that is considered socio-linguistically homogeneous (for example a dialect area), group interviews have to be carried out in at least two different places. In each place a group interview should be done with about ten participants, which may then be complemented by about ten individual interviews. A variety of people should be included in both types of interviews such as old/young, men/women, elite/non-

elite, in order to ensure that answers are not representative of just one specific category (without our being aware of it).

General considerations for conducting group interviews: The interview develops naturally as the survey team presents itself to the local authorities (village chief). People from the village begin to gather, and by explaining to the chief the purpose of the survey we establish a good basis for a group interview. For many areas of interest, the information obtained through group interviews, i.e. the consensus which is expressed by the participants, is sufficient.

Reasons for doing further group interviews: If our first group interviews reveal that the area which we assumed to be homogeneous seems to be heterogenous, then further group interviews are warranted. Ambiguity in a group interview or dominance of one person, such as the chief, are also reasons for doing an additional group interview.

All surveyors should take notes, but above all the ones who are not leading the interview. If the situation allows, it is recommended to record the group interview.

General considerations for conducting individual interviews: There may be issues where we have to be very sensitive to potential subtle differences of opinion, where a group consensus would be unsatisfactory. Since individual interviews take a lot of time, not only to carry them out, but also for proper evaluation, it is recommended that they be used only for specific issues. For example, when proposing the choice of a certain reference dialect, since we have to be very sensitive concerning subtle differences of opinion expressed towards the different dialects of a language, it is recommended that individual interviews be conducted. In other words, these are mainly added where there is more than one dialect in the surveyed language or a cluster of related languages which have the potential for being served by one standard. Primarily this is to check attitudes towards the different speech forms, thus providing a better feel for the potential acceptance of written material in a neighbouring speech form. Issues which have been dealt with in group interviews and which need further clarification might also warrant proceeding with individual interviews.

(Concerning reference dialect: A RA survey should provide clues, but the actual proposal of a particular dialect as the standard reference dialect is beyond the scope of a RA survey. In view of a potential translation project I would like to refer to Sadembouo's (1989) paper in which he emphasizes the integration of the community in the decision-making process: "Constitution and function of a language committee and the choice of a reference dialect".)

3.1.4. People involved: Ideally there are three people involved: an experienced SIL member, a Cameroonian colleague, and an SIL member who is in a training program.

3.1.5. Required time: Let us assume one week of preliminary studies/preparation for the survey trip. The time it takes to survey a language depends on the number of speech forms surveyed. Generally one to two days are required per speech form (time for travelling not included). In other words, a language with three dialects takes about one week. Two more weeks are required for writing a summary report for local government officials, writing the full report, and sending information to the Ethnologue, the Bibleless People Prayer Project and other institutions/places such as Global Research Database. (Several languages may be surveyed in the context of the same field trip.)

3.1.6. Principle for working with questionnaires: Reference here is to Showalter's (1991) paper on sociolinguistic questionnaires entitled "Getting what you ask for". In this paper she points out two basic problems which we have to be aware of in preparing interviews and questionnaires for Rapid Appraisal surveys. (The paper also contains an annotated list of survey questions to which I will refer later, as well as provides good insight into question formulation problems.)

Problem 1: The distinction between survey objectives and actual survey questions.

Often there is no clear distinction made between different levels of questions which surveys are seeking to answer. One has to do with what it is we need to find out, i.e. the survey objectives, and the other with what we actually ask in order to find this out, i.e. the survey questions.

Problem 2: What makes an interview informal?

Quite often people have mistaken notions concerning what an informal interview is:

"The thing that should be informal in a survey interview is not the preparation or the methodology but the social interaction itself. Labov suggests a method for carrying out an informal interview involving modules or sets of questions organized around specific topics. The initial and final questions from each module are designed to facilitate topic shifts to other modules in the system. If you have very clear ideas of what you want to ask and how you want to word your questions, of how to start and how to end, of good transitions to new ideas, then you can relax and have a very well planned informal interview" (Showalter 1991: 207).

3.1.7. Report writing: Considering the survey objectives mentioned in section 2, the areas below should be covered. Wherever used, a sample questionnaire and raw scores should be included, as well as the results of any lexicostatistical analysis.

The following order is recommended for the evaluation and report-writing stages but not so much for the group interviews nor the layout of the questionnaire for individual interviews:

- Dialectology:
 - Intelligibility among linguistically related varieties of a language
 - Attitude towards these varieties
- Bilingualism:
 - Proficiency in a second language or in a distinct standard dialect
 - Attitude towards these varieties
- Viability:
 - Language use
 - Attitude towards the vernacular language
- Additional considerations:
 - Additional factors related to the viability of a language and/or a standardization project
 - Inquiries for other missions, organisations and/or general information

3.2. Basic content/layout of a complete interview:

General comments

Concerning the actual survey questions, I am basically referring to the appendix to Cathy Showalter's paper (referred to as CS) which contains an annotated list of sociolinguistic questions. This list is above all based on John Bendor-Samuel's (1980) sociolinguistic profile. At the same time I am complementing her suggestions with additional questions/information based on personal survey experience.

The idea is that a set of questions can be chosen either for group interviews or for individual questionnaires. It should be noted that some of the questions given are more appropriate for an individual rather than a group interview, and vice-versa. Although the questions are basically designed in such a way that they could be addressed to anybody, there are certain issues, above all in section 3.2.5. and 3.2.6. which are best directed to certain categories of people (e.g. church use questions to church leaders).

In determining the extent of a group or individual interview, I would like to emphasize that what we try to do is meet the survey objectives rather than answer each of the questions per se. Although all the basic issues mentioned in section 2 should be dealt with, it is unnecessary to do an in-depth investigation of each and every area, i.e. for certain issues it may be enough to

use a few of the questions, whereas for other issues the entire set should be used or extended by additional questions. In any case, the specific features of each individual sociolinguistic situation require a flexible approach. But, as a general guideline, a group interview should not take more than two hours and an individual interview should be shorter than one hour.

Moreover, a certain question might be used for different purposes, i.e. it may provide clues to help clarify different issues. For example, let us assume a positive answer to the question, "If you are in (location), do you understand the people there?" This answer not only expresses something about the actual level of intelligibility but also (or above all) about the attitude towards the other speech form.

Showalter (1991: 210) comments as follows on the annotated list of sociolinguistic questions:

"IV. B. What the list of annotated survey questions is not

The annotated list is not a survey form. It is left to the surveyor to decide where to begin and end, and how to organize the modules. Some questions on the list are relevant to more than one category of objectives.

It is also not a complete list of questions that might be asked in order to elicit the information required by the survey objectives. Some areas of questioning need further development.

Even so, the list as it stands is too long for a single survey. Balancing the need for information with the need for brevity was a problem mentioned by many surveyors. Perhaps it is not possible to achieve both goals, and one or the other value will have to be sacrificed, depending on the dominant need of the situation."

Showalter (1991: 208) also alerts the reader to the importance of distinguishing between objective and subjective information:

"II. B. 5. Subjective data treated as objective information

Often questions requiring opinions or judgments may serve better as gauges of attitude or of folk typology than of linguistic reality. We need both kinds of information, and we need to include questions designed to subjective evaluations as well as objective information...."

In the following presentation, survey objectives are in plain type and the actual questions to be asked are in italics, so as to clearly distinguish between the two.

The following topics should be covered, in the order shown, during the actual group and/or individual interviews and the preparation of the corresponding questionnaires:

1. Intelligibility among linguistically related varieties of a language
2. Proficiency in a second language or in a distinct standard dialect
3. Language use
4. Attitudes
5. Additional factors related to the viability of a language and/or a standardization project
6. Inquiries for other missions, organisations and/or general information

These are presented below in detail (sections 3.2.1 - 3.2.6).

3.2.1 Intelligibility among linguistically related varieties of a language

Dialect situation: During the preparation phase we should have already obtained a good idea about the dialect situation and closely related languages. By using a map or drawing a sketch, and by asking the corresponding questions, we get people's perception about the dialect situation (I am aware that the perception of the dialect situation depends more on extralinguistic or sociolinguistic factors than on linguistic differences). In the case where word lists are not already available, it is necessary to determine in which speech forms it would be helpful to take a word list.

Reference to Cathy Showalter's annotated list:
CS: Section B. Primary factors, 4.e. Attitudes to dialects

Which dialects are recognized as belonging to the language?
Which dialects are not held to belong?

Tell me which villages around here speak just exactly like you. Do people in x talk the same way as you do?

Now tell me which villages speak the same language as you, but it is slightly different.

Tell me which villages speak your language, but speak it even more differently. Can you still understand everything they say?

Which villages speak the same language as you, but they do it so differently that you can't understand everything they say if they talk quickly?

Do you belong together? Why, why not?

Which nearby villages speak an entirely different language?

Are there any villages far away from here where people speak the same language as you?

Do other villages where (MT) is spoken have different names for (MT)? What do they call the language? What do they call themselves?

Concerning questions to assess intelligibility, Showalter (Section B. Primary factors, 1. Intelligibility) does not make any suggestions but refers directly to dialect intelligibility testing such as Recorded Text Testing. However, in order to get an initial idea of the level of intercomprehension, we use the following questions:

Have you ever been to (location)?

(This question serves as an introduction in the context of an individual interview but also gives clues as to travel habits.)

If you are in (location), do you understand the people there?

What language do you speak over there?

Do you speak (MT)? Do you keep your normal manner of speaking?

What do people in (location) respond in? Do they respond in (local variety)?

If there seems to be intercomprehension, the following questions are asked in order to get an idea as to what extent the language has to be learned:

Can a child of about six years from here understand people in (location)? If not, at what age would he be able to?

In order to check whether the people of an entire linguistic area have learned a neighbouring variety or only the people in the border area, we have to ask whether people from the villages which are furthest away understand the neighbouring variety as well or not:

Do people in (location away from the border) understand (neighbouring variety)?

3.2.2 Proficiency in a second language or in a distinct standard dialect

The assessment of the level of bilingualism requires corresponding bilingualism testing. Nevertheless, in the context of a RA survey we are still able to look for indicators of second language proficiency which not only give clues as to the actual level of bilingualism but also provide the information required for potential subsequent bilingualism testing, so as to help define specific objectives and decide which tools to use. Moreover, we are not only interested in the actual level of bilingualism (the situation at a particular point in time), but also in future trends.

The guiding issues to consider as research is carried out, for this and the next section on language use, are as follows (as per D. Hatfield):

- is the indigenous language being maintained in the community?
- is a related dialect spreading (as a form of oral standard)?
- is another language (LWC or national language) spreading?

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 2. Bilingualism

Here are some suggested questions to ask:

What languages do you speak well? Which ones a little bit?

By comparing just two varieties, but including all the mentioned languages, we ask for the order of competence:

Would you say that you speak (x) or (y) better? Or do you speak them about the same?

If a certain speech variety of interest has not been mentioned, it is important to explicitly ask for it:

Do you speak (language in question)?

What language(s) do you understand but not speak?

What language(s) did you speak at home when you were a child?

If more than one:

Did you speak one of these first?

In order to check whether the people in an entire linguistic area have learned a neighbouring language or only the people in the border area, we have to ask whether people from the villages which are furthest away speak the neighbouring language as well or not (as opposed to understanding only as asked in section 3.2.1. regarding intelligibility):

Do people in (location away from the border) speak (neighbouring language)?

In his paper "Indicators of second-language proficiency," Cal Rensch (1992) presents a study of two indicators which seem to give good insight into language proficiency: Level of education (where the language in question is used for formal education) and frequency of use.

Frequency of contact:

In his study Rensch asserts that only people who use the language daily or many times a day have the potential for acquiring an adequate level of bilingualism. Therefore questions such as the following should be asked:

Do you speak (second language) every day or only once in a while? With whom?

Are there other people who speak it on a daily basis? Who?

The latter questions are asked in order to gain insight into what categories of the population have the potential for being adequately bilingual.

Level of education:

In cases where the second language is used for formal education, an appropriate question would be:

Did you attend school? Up to what grade?

According to Rensch's study it seems that only people with six or more years of education in the language in question have the potential for being adequately bilingual.

During our pilot Rapid Appraisal survey we also made use of a self-evaluation questionnaire which for various reasons did not work out very well (see comments on self-evaluation questionnaires by Frank Blair). I think that it is not within the scope of a RA survey to directly assess the level of bilingualism. But, as mentioned above, we can look for indicators of second language proficiency.

3.2.3 Language use

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 3. Language use:

- a. Language displacement
- b. Religious use

Here are some suggested questions concerning language use:

3.2.3.1 Language displacement:

Is the language being displaced?
Is the displacement fast/moderate/slow?

Are there people in this village who do not speak your language?

What language(s) do they speak? Do they learn your language?

Is there anybody else who speaks your language?

Are there just a few, or many? Do they speak just a little bit or do they speak it well?

Are there people in the village who speak your language as their only language? Who?

Do you know any (MT people) who don't speak (MT) any more? Are there many? Where do they live?

What language do children in this village learn first?

Do many children learn (another language) before they start school?

What language(s) do (your) preschool children speak in playing with other children?

What language(s) do you use most often:

- *with your parents, with your siblings?*
- *with your spouse(s), your children?*
- *in a personal prayer?*
- *with your friend(s) (in the village)?*
- *with the chief?*
- *in the fields?*
- *at the market (in the village)?*
- *at the dispensary?*
- *at school?*
- *with government officials?*

3.2.3.2 Religious use

To what extent is the mother tongue used in religious activities?

What language is used most often at the church/mosque for:

- *the scripture reading/liturgy, singing, preaching, praying?*
- *the announcements?*
- *If a guest speaker/preacher is preaching in the (trade language/national language), is an interpretation given?*
- *If this guest speaker is talking to the youth group, is he interpreted as well?*

3.2.4 Attitudes

In addition to general considerations, what interests us here are attitudes towards linguistically related varieties, second language or a distinct standard dialect, and the vernacular language itself.

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 4. Language attitudes, b. Attitude to language use

For what activities is the first language thought inadequate? Give reasons.
For what activities is the second or third language thought inadequate? Give reasons.
Are there strong social, economic, political, or religious motivations for preferring a particular language?

Here are some examples of questions to be asked:

What language do you like the most? Why?
Is it good to speak (MT)? Why?
What language do you think God likes best?
What language is best to use when you want to talk about funerals? Would you ever use (other language) at a funeral?
What language is best for singing traditional songs? Do you ever sing in (trade language/national language)?
What language(s) should be taught in school?
Do you think (MT) is as good as (other language)?
Can you think of a situation in which it is not good to use (MT)?
Were you ever embarrassed because someone heard you speaking (MT, other language)?
What is the most useful language to know around here?
Is it more important for boys than for girls to learn (other language)? Why?

3.2.4.1 Attitude towards linguistically related varieties of a language

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 4. Language attitudes, e. Attitudes to dialects

Which dialects are seen as prestigious?
Which dialects are deprecated?

How would you describe the way people in (place name of another dialect group) speak (language name), compared with the way you speak it?
Where is the best (MT) spoken? Why is it the best?
Are there (MT) people who speak (MT) poorly? Who?
Would you like to read and write in (other varieties)? To which one would you give first choice, second choice...? Why?

3.2.4.2 Attitude towards a second language or a distinct standard dialect

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 4. Language attitudes, c. Attitudes toward speakers of other languages

Are there positive or negative stereotypes or attitudes about speakers of the standard dialect, national, or trade language?

Do people respect someone who speaks (other language) more than someone who doesn't speak this language?
If you lost your identity card and money in the village market, and a (MT) speaker found it, would he return it? And if it were a (other language) speaker, would he return it?

Would you like for your son or daughter to marry someone who speaks only (other variety)? Why or why not?
Is it good or bad to live next to speakers of (other varieties)? Why?
Can you always understand when people speak (L2,L3,...)?
Do you always understand jokes or proverbs in (L2,L3,...)?
Are you always able to understand a heated argument between two people speaking (L2,L3,...)?
Can you always say what you want to say in (L2,L3,...)
Could you testify in an official judgment in (L2,L3,...), and explain in detail the facts of an event that you witnessed?
Would you like to be able to speak (L2,L3,...) better? Why?
Would you like to read and write in (L2,L3,...)? To which one would you give first choice, second choice...? Why?

3.2.4.3 Attitude towards the vernacular language

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 4. Language attitudes:
 a. Attitude towards language displacement
 d. Desire for mother-tongue literature

The following questions should be considered:

- Attitude towards language displacement:

If the language is being displaced, is this seen as good or bad?

What language should your children learn first? Why?
Do young people here speak (MT) well, the way it ought to be spoken?
If a young person speaks (second language) at home, would an old person be unhappy about it?
Are the young people proud of your language?
When the children of this village grow up and have children of their own, do you think those children will speak your language? Is this good or bad? Why?
A long time from now, do you think people will stop speaking (MT) and just speak (other language)?

- Desire for mother-tongue literature:

Have you ever seen anything written in your language?
Do you think it would be good to be able to read and write your language?
Would you like your children to learn to read and write (MT)?
What kind of things would you like to have written in your language?

3.2.5 Additional factors related to the viability of a language and/or a standardisation project

The guiding issues to consider as research is carried out, are as follows (as per Debbie Hatfield):

- What type of literacy project is possible/likely to succeed?
- Present level of literacy in the community
- Past/present/planned development or literacy activities
- Motivation for oral literature in own/related varieties (interest in traditional narratives)

CS: Section B. Primary factors, 3. Language use, c. Official or public use
 CS: Section C. Secondary factors.

Questions should be asked about:

3.2.5.1. Social factors:

Basic demographic information:

Number of people (as an indicator of viability)?

- *What do you call yourselves? What are you called by your neighbours / the government?*

Intermarriage (between different dialects/languages):

- *Do a lot of people from the village marry people from neighbouring groups?*
- *Is it good to allow a young (MT) man to marry a woman who is not (MT)? What about a (MT) woman who wants to marry a man who is not (MT)? Does this happen often?*
- *If a (MT) man marries a (L2...) woman, where do they live? What language would their children speak? If a (MT) woman marries a (L2...) man, where do they live? What language would their children speak?*

Migration:

- *Do people from here go to (major town) very often? Do very many go, or just a few? What do they go for?*
- *Do young people stay in the village or do they move into town? Why?*
- *Are certain people returning to the village to stay? Who and why?*
- *Are there people from here who go away during certain seasons of the year? Where do they go?*
- *Do many strangers come to this village? Where do they come from? What do they come for? Do they speak (local language), or do they speak other languages?*
- *Are there groups of outsiders/strangers who come regularly into this region? What do they come for? Are there many or just a few? Do they come often? Do they stay very long?*

3.2.5.2. Official or public use/government policy:

Are there materials published in the language?

Are there materials published about the language?

Is the language used in the media?

- *Have you ever seen anything written in (MT)?*
- *Are there local people working on writing the language down? Is there a language committee?*
- *Do you know of outsiders who have lived in the area for a while and written books about (MT) or the (name of people)?*
- *Do you ever hear (MT) on the radio?*
- *Is the (MT) ever used in public meetings?*
- *Have you ever seen an article in a newspaper written in (MT)?*

3.2.5.3. Educational policies:

- *Schools in the area: Primary? Secondary?*
- *Do most (MT) children go to school? If not, why?*
- *Has the local language ever been used as a language of instruction in the primary school?*
- *Has there ever been an adult literacy program?*

3.2.5.4. Religious factors:

What is the attitude/policy of the churches and missions towards the use of the local language?
Towards the translation of the Bible?

- *What churches, missions, or other religious groups are present?*
- *Is there any written material such as Scripture portions, song books?*
- *Are Scripture portions translated into the local language in the context of the preparation for the Sunday service?*
- *Are there gospel recordings?*

3.2.5.5. Helpful resource articles

In "Identifying obstacles to ongoing vernacular literacy", (1991: 19), Roland Walker writes regarding the promotion of MT literacy.

"What are the characteristics of a "less than ideal environment" for the flourishing of VL literacy? David Bendor-Samuel (1988) has summarized the obstacles to ongoing VL literacy, which include the following:

- difficult orthography
- lack of cultural and demographic cohesion
- weak ethnic identity
- great contact with the national language
- language shift
- previous use of the national language for literacy
- no "natural framework for the use of VL literature" (e.g. no church)
- lack of government approval and support
- lack of community involvement in the program."

In his paper Walker discusses the following three obstacles: language shift, monoliteracy in the NL and low potential for community involvement. He then describes how to identify them through field research (data collection and subsequent analysis). The methodology for the data collection and the analysis go beyond the scope of a RA survey (Walker gives emphasis to observed language use). But the paper is highly recommended for newly assigned village teams in order to confirm the findings of a possible previous RA survey concerning project viability.

In "Three socio-economic factors affecting the nature and development of language programs" (1991), John Watters points to three socio-economic factors which seem to be relevant for the prediction of the viability of a language program. These factors are:

- the homogeneity of the linguistic community, i.e. its social cohesion
- the openness of the community to change and to improve their living conditions, i.e. its posture towards development
- the presence at the local level of a middle-aged leadership

"The basic hypothesis deriving from these factors is that the greater the community's homogeneity, openness to the outside, and resident middle-aged leadership, the greater is the possibility for a widespread community participation in the development and implementation of a mass language program."

In view of these three factors, John Watters distinguishes four types of society which are basically found: Traditional communities, changing communities, changed communities and disintegrating communities.

Although in the paper there are additional factors mentioned, the proposed categorisation into four types of communities based on the three factors does not consider the complexity of each individual sociolinguistic reality. Nevertheless, this categorisation gives initial clues as to the

nature and the development of a potential language program. It is feasible to look at this in the context of an RA survey.

3.2.6 Inquiries for other missions, organisations and/or general information

CS: Section A. Basic demographic and linguistic information

CS: Section C. Secondary factors

Population trends:

- Growth/decrease of the local population?
- Distribution according to age groups?
- What percentage of the population is under 15 years of age?
- Is there a certain age group with a big increase/decrease?

Geography:

- How easy or difficult is access to the region?
- Are there natural barriers that divide the group?

Other allocation factors:

- Comments on basic infrastructure, food supply, water situation, etc.

Personal information about respondent:

- Although personal information questions may be placed at the top of a questionnaire, these questions should be asked towards the end of an interview, i.e. once a certain level of confidence has been established.

See Global Research Database: in Bergman (1991) appendix for other possible data to gather.

4. Field Experience

After surveying about 20 languages and training 8 people I have been able to make the following observations:

- although the method is very simple (carrying out some interviews) it is not as easy as it may appear. Unexperienced surveyors lack built-in survey objectives.
- as in any survey there is the danger of compromise in view of chosen test places, sampled people, local interpreters, etc. The temptation exists that the circumstances will dictate the choices made.
- by neglecting to do the evaluation on the field in the proper way, the team may leave the field without having a good idea of the sociolinguistic situation. This not only makes report-writing and decision-making back home difficult, it may even result in having to repeat the survey.
- although RA surveys are not very time-consuming, some people neglect to cover all the areas, i.e. some basic questions are left unanswered.

5. Conclusion

Although I am aware that the results of a RA survey are based on data which have been collected by direct questioning, I think RA gives sufficient insight for evaluating whether a possible translation need is unlikely or probable. In some cases it may even be possible to come up with a "definite translation need" decision.

A "definite need" decision based on the findings of a RA survey may not only be possible but may even be necessary for economy's sake. For example, where indicators of second language proficiency reveal a low level of bilingualism (and other factors point to a definite translation need) it would be inappropriate to carry out expensive bilingualism testing. Part of the job of a

new translation team would then be to confirm the findings and the tentative decision of the survey by observing language use.

The method is not valid for determining "no need". For such a decision we need more evidence, i.e. a solid basis of data with the corresponding analysis. These go far beyond the scope of a RA survey.

Overall, we can conclude that the above reflects nothing new; what is suggested is merely a consistent application of what we have already learned. Ultimately, the success of Rapid Appraisal depends on whether we succeed in following through with what we have already learned.

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