

KAY WILLIAMSON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (KWEF)

Report to Trustees, July 2009

[N.B. This report contains material on progress since the report dated October 2008]

Roger Blench

Summary

1. The situation in Rivers State remains very bad, with government bombing villages from the air, large numbers of refugees reaching Port Harcourt and accelerated attacks on oil pipelines. Virtually all expatriates have now left. No work can be undertaken for the foreseeable future.

2. I have now completed the preparation of a computerised database-format of one of Kay's largest-scale works, the Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist, typed out in mimeo in Ibadan in two huge volumes in 1968 and 1972. This will be put on the web but is also being integrated into Comparalex, an African language database, established by the Institute of Linguistics in Montreal.

3. From early February to mid-May I was in Nigeria and Cameroun running a series of workshops on dictionary preparation and continuing with current projects. More than fifty languages cross the Nigeria-Cameroun border and very often language projects based in Cameroun also cover Nigerian populations. Since then I have been attending a series of conferences to present the work of the Foundation and making available all the freshly-collected data on the KWEF website.

Support to workshops

There are now a large number of committees working on languages in various regions of Nigeria. However, they often do not have the resources to meet one another and exchange experiences and solve problems of orthography and analysis. Kay gave support to numerous workshops in her lifetime, and it seemed appropriate to continue this tradition. Following the successful workshop on the West Kainji languages in March, 2008 a further workshop is planned for February 2010, in collaboration with Stuart McGill. Information will be posted on the web shortly, once we have a data fixed.

Single language intensive workshops

This was the most important initiative undertaken this year. Dictionary and phonology workshops were conducted for the following languages;

Language	Location	Date
Kotoko	Lagwan Birni	16-18/2/09
Mofu	Maroua	19-21/2/09
Ouldeme	Mayo Plata	21-23/2/09
Vame	Mayo Plata	23-25/2/09
Muyang	Guduba	26-28/2/09
Ndiki	Ombessa	2-6/3/09
Ombessa cluster	Ombessa	2-6/3/09
Ngomba	Mbouda	8-11/3/09
Ngiemboon	Bamougong	8-11/3/09
Nooni	Nkor	12-14/3/09
Limbum	Nkambe	16-18/3/09
Yamba	Mdem	19-21/3/09
Oroko	Big Bekondo	23-28/3/09
Akɔɔsɛ	Big Bekondo	23-28/3/09
Basaa	Makak	30/3-3/4/09
Bagyeli	Makak	30/3-3/4/09

Language	Location	Date
Kwasio	Lolodorf	4/4/09
Cen	Jos	19/4/09
Bura	Jos	24-25/4/09
Berom	Jos	28-29/4/09
Ashe	Jos	4-5/5/09
Tinor	Jos	7-8/5/09
Mwaghavul	Panyam	13/5/09

The SIL was the collaborator for KWEF in Cameroun and organised logistics.

Language survey

I have been working to survey languages newly reported and have been able to collect primary data on the three following unknown languages.

Language	Location	Date
Baka	Baka	27/2/09
Gwara	Gora	20/4/09
Shang	Kushampa	11/5/09

These are all posted on the web and I consider represents a significant achievement for KWEF, compared with the costs other larger funds for this type of work.

Data collected by Barau Kato, paid for with KWEF funds, on Yoto in October 2008, proved, on analysis, also to be an unknown language, which provides another valuable resource.

Jos Linguistic Circle (JLC)

This has been one of our most successful initiatives. Since its inception in 2006, KWEF has supported meetings with hire of rooms and refreshments, and has been able to bring together a growing number of enthusiasts for Nigerian languages.

Publications

I see that trying to bring to press unpublished manuscripts is an important goal for KWEF. I append a list of mss. that I have been working on. This is a long-term objective as many will take considerable work to bring to press. So part of my work for the future will be to encouraging ms. production, editing and formatting. I have found that going to conferences is an important part of meeting supervisors of interesting Ph.D.s which we eventually will hope to publish and distribute in Nigeria.

I am also supporting a series of local publications in Nigeria (or in Cameroun if the language is also spoken in Nigeria). Two volumes have now been published (see Appendix).

Books to improve Nigerian library resources

Further small purchases of books were made to transmit to Nigerian libraries of literacy projects.

Conferences attended where work done under KWEF has been presented 2008-2009

Conferences make it possible to both present work done with KWEF funding and to distribute the flyer, and purchase books to improve Nigerian library resources.

Further to the conferences in the previous report, the following were attended;

Leipzig, 12-14th June
Aussois, 21-25th June

In August I will present KWEF work at the World Congress on African Linguistics at Köln, August 21-25th and the CALL in Leiden 27-30th August.

Other issues

Website

<http://www.rogerblench.info/KWEF/KW%20opening%20page.htm>

General conclusions

Focused visits to Nigeria and working with existing literacy groups has enabled me to collect a great deal of data in a short time. This is published on the KWEF website while awaiting completion for publication. With the agreement of the trustees, I will try and make visits to Nigeria twice a year, to continue work with my collaborators. I am presently attempting to get a permanent residence stamp to enable me to go in and out freely.

Accounts. Presented separately.

Publications in progress

International series

1. Kuteb grammar [now with the publisher]
2. Mofu Dictionary [proofs signed off]
3. Tarok Dictionary
4. Mambai grammar
5. Mada dictionary
6. Muyang dictionary
7. The Rigwe language
8. Berom dictionary
9. Proceedings of the Jos Linguistic Circle, Volume I.

Further in the future

1. Kuteb dictionary
2. Tyap grammar
3. Kirya dictionary
4. Oko grammar

Nigerian series

1. The Tarok language [printed]
2. Babanki dictionary [printed]