The Adzera Family of Languages, Morobe District, New Guinea[1]

H.A. Holzknecht - University of Queensland

Two recent works (Hooley, 1970[2] and Hooley & McElhanon, 1971[3]) add considerably to our linguistic knowledge of both Non-Austroneasian and Austronesian languages in the Morobe District of New Guinea. This has been done not only through examination of existing comparative materials, such as Fischer, 1963 and Sankoff, 1968, but also through material gathered throughout the Morobe District using the Standard Word List (Bee and Pence, 1962). The resulting mass of data was examined for apparent cognates and analysed on this basis with the help of a computer at the University of Papua New Guinea (1970:12). These studies also bring up to date Capell's survey of 1962 (itself partly based on Schmitz' earlier work, 1960), and his recent publication (1969).

The purpose of this short article is not to dispute the overall results of these two studies, but to point out a number of unnecessary mistakes and to correct some misinter-pretations. The points I wish to comment on refer to the Adzera[4] Family and the speech communities within this family (1970:35-40; 1971: 1078-1079).
These points are -

1. It is unfortunate that analyses in and results of the 1970 study change some of the results of the 1971 publication. It is as if the 1971 paper was written before analysis of the survey data was complete, this being then written up in the 1970 study (e.g., 1971: 1078, stating that there appear to be four major families of Austronesian langauges in the District, versus 1970: 25-26, where there are only three major Austronesian families). Per-haps the 1971 paper could have been revised and updated before publication.

2.   Generally, the naming of speech communities and languages is based on pre-vious information and/or publications and communications about the particular area in question as well as the local name for the language. Once a language name has been given and is accepted by the people concerned, the name should be adhered to, especially by research workers, in order to reduce confusion and to discourage a multiplicity of names for each speech community. There are a number of cases in point in these two works just within the Adzera Family of languages. One that springs most readily to mind is the name Hop (1970: 35-39; 1971: 1078), applied to a small speech community in the upper Ramu Valley (actually in the Madang District, but part of the Adzera Family of languages). The

name is completely foreign and unknown.[5] They call themselves, and are known by other Adzera-speakers, as <u>Mari'</u> . This name for this group of people has been known and used since the early 1920's (e.g. Behrmann, 1923:66; Flierl, 1927:167). There may be a good reason for changing the name <u>Kukukuku</u> to <u>Anga</u> (1971: 1066), such as the peoples' own distaste of the name and its associations, but there certainly is no such reason for replacing <u>Mari'</u> with <u>Hop.</u>

There is also no really valid reason for reverting from Fischer's consistent usage (1963: 278-286) of the name <u>Wampar</u> for the largest language group in the lower Markham Valley to the more coastal and Jabêm rendition <u>Laewomba</u> (1971: 1078) or <u>Laewamba</u> (1970: 36) (this name is also spelled variously in the literature – Leiwomba, Laiwomba, Laewampar, etc.). The justification for this change (1970: 36, referring to 1971: 1078) is that the name Wampur (which Fischer is said to have applied to the lower Markham Valley group mentioned above; see 1971: 1078) refers also to a very small speech community on the south side of the Markham Valley, in the headwaters area of the Wanton River. However, this argument is completely invalid since Fischer nowhere uses the name <u>Wampur;</u> the name he does use is <u>Wampar,</u> which is still the present people's own term for themselves and for their language. There can be no confusion between Wampar and Wampur if the names are applied correctly to the respective speech communities.

3.   Having done research in the upper Markham Valley and having access to all the unpublished materials[6] on the Adzera language, I would not agree that the main district groups (Read, 1946/47: 98-99) speak dialects of the same language, Adzera. There are in fact many more such groups within the Adzera language than the two studies enumerate (1970:35-36; 1971:1078-1079). These are : Amari, Ngarowapum, Sauf-Zumim, Onga, Guruf, Mutsing (?), Mamaringan, Jarus, Sangan (this may in fact be two such groups), Leron, and, at the edges of this broad area, Mari', Wampur, Sukurum and possibly Sirasira. There are , in fact, fourteen plus groups involved. If the dialect/language level lies between 77% and 81% of shared cognates (1970:23-25), then I believe that there are no differences of dialect proportions between at least Amari, Ngarowapum, Sauf-Zumim, Mamaringan, Mutsing (?), and Sangan. These are the Adzera-speaking groups that live on the floor of the valley itself. The other groups within the broad area mentioned live on the periphery of the valley, generally up into some of the side valleys such as the Leron valley (Leron group) and the Mangian valley (Jarus group) and as such are more isolated from the main body of Adzera-speakers on the valley floor. As for the even more peripheral

groups mentioned above there is a fairly close cultural as well as linguistic similarity between them that would repay a more detailed study. A detailed word list is now being prepared for a survey within the Adzera language group itself in order to determine more exactly the nature of the linguistic relationships between these "district groups"; it is hoped that the results of this survey can be reported shortly.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat my main point that names for language groups and lesser speech communities must not be changed at whim in order to make language maps seem neater, more tidy, etc. Those of us engaged in any type of research in New Guinea (or anywhere else for that matter) ought not to forget that we are always dealing with people, in groups or as individuals. These people, like any other people, have group identifications for their respective groups. In this pre-national era in New Guinea we must consider this factor as well as information from previous publications and other reliable communications when we put names for groups on linguistic and anthropological maps. As well, this information should, if at all possible, be thoroughly checked in the field before publication.

FOOTNOTES

1. I use 'New Guinea' here to cover both Papua and New Guinea.

2. This study will hereafter be referred to simply as '1970'.

3. This publication will hereafter be referred to as '1971'.

4. Adzera, not Azera, as quoted throughout 1970 and 1971; the spelling was amended in 1962 because of the realization that a slightly different sound was involved; Holzknecht, K.G., n.d. (b), see also Dempwolff, (circa 1928).

5. My fieldwork area, the Amari area of the Adzera language group, bordered on the Mari' group and I visited them a number of times in 1969-1970 . This fieldwork was partially supported, financially and in terms of equipment, by the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Queensland.

6. These are now being prepared for publication by K.G. Holzknecht and H.A. Holzknecht.

REFERENCES

Bee, D. & A. Pence	1962	Toward Standardization of a Survey Word List for Papua and New Guinea. Studies in New Guinea Linguistics, Oceania Linguistic Monographs No. 6, Sydney.
Behrmann, W	1923	Nachrichten aus Kaiser Wilhelmsland, Neuginea. Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft fuer Erdkunde zu Berlin, No. 1-2: 65-66.
Capell, A.	1962	A Linguistic Survey of the South Western Pacific, Noumea, South Pacific Commission Technical Paper, No. 136.
Capell, A.	1969	A Survey of New Guinea Languages, Sydney, Sydney University Press.
Dempwolff, O.	c.1928	Analyse der Azera-Sprache, Manuscript Book 786, Hamburg University Library.
Fischer, H.	1963	Watut, Kulturgeschichtliche Forschungen, Band 10. Braunschweig, Albert Limbach Verlag.
Flierl, J.	1927	Forty Years in New Guinea Chicago, Wartburg Publishing House.
Holzknecht, K. G.	n.d.	a) Adzera Alphabet. (MS, typescript). b) The Phonemes of the Adzera Language.(MS, typescript). c) Morphophonemics of the Adzera Language.(MS.typescript). d) Verb Forms of the Adzera Language. (MS.typescript). e) Adzera-German-English Dictionary, 2 vols(typescript). f) German-Adzera Dictionary 1 volume (typescript). g) English-Adzera Dictionary, 1 volume (typescript).
Hooley, B. A.	1970	Mapos Buang – Territory of New Guinea. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania.
Hooley, B.A. & K. McE Ihanon	1971	Languages of the Morobe District–New Guinea, pp. 1065-1094 of S.A. Wurm & D.C. Laycock (eds.), A Festschrift for Dr. A. Capell, Canberra, Linguistic Circle, 1971.
Read, K. E.	1946/1947	Social Organization in the Markham Valley, New Guinea, Oceania, Vol. XVII, 2:93-118
Sankoff, G.	1968	Social Aspects of Multilingualism. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, McGill University.
Schmitz, C.A.	1960	Historische Probleme in Nordost Neuguinea, Huon Halbinsel. Studien zur Kulturkunde, Band 16. Wiesbaden, F. Steiner Verlag.