

# **THE WHEEL OF VITALITY**

PRESENTED BY THE SIL-PNG SURVEY TEAM

# WHAT IS THE WHEEL OF VITALITY?

A participatory research tool for rapidly assessing language vitality at the village level

Better than one-on-one interviews

Puts research into the hands of the community



# WHAT IS THE WHEEL OF VITALITY



# LANGUAGE VITALITY

- Often the most important factor for NGOs planning language development
- Defined by the “EGIDS”
- Most languages in PNG are in the 6a, 6b, 7 range
  - **EGIDS 6a (Vigorous/sustainable orality):** Vernacular spoken by all generations
  - **EGIDS 6b (Threatened):** Some children no longer speak the vernacular (not sustainable)
  - **EGIDS 7 (Shifting):** Only the child-bearing generation and older continue to speak the vernacular (not sustainable)

# **“EGIDS” WORKS TOGETHER WITH “FAMED”**

## **Simons’ & Lewis’ FAMED conditions**


- Function (stable domains of use)
- Acquisition (intergenerational)
- Motivation (spiritual, economic, social etc.)
- Environment (gov. policies)
- Diglossia (agreed upon domains)

# “EGIDS” AND “FAMED” WORK TOGETHER: WHEEL OF VITALITY FOCUSES ON ACQUISITION

EGIDS	Function	Acquisition	Motivation	Diglossia
6a				
6b				

# WHEEL OF VITALITY WAS BORN IN *NEW BRITAIN*

*“Vitality was seen to be central because if threatened in any way, resources invested in language development may not subsequently benefit the community”*  
(Grummit, 2012).

1. Surveyors needed a faster way to assess vitality.
  2. Surveyors wanted a more culturally appropriate method of data collection.
- 

# HOW IT WORKS: ORIGINAL





# HOW IT WORKS: REVISED



# HOW IT WORKS: IMPROVISATIONS



# HOW IT WORKS: DETAILS

## Observation Schedule

Village: Danab Language: Kou Start/stop time: 9:00-10:00

**Who Participates in the Discussion?**  
 Circle groups that participate in discussion and identify topic underneath. Also TALLY number present during each old men #: 11 middle-aged men # 111 young men # 114-111 old women # 11 middle-aged women # 111-111 young women # 111-111

Who from the community leads this activity? How are decisions made?  
Parents check - little groups before anyone comes forward. One young man stands up and explains general situation to us, then another son came to intro/translate. I was watching closely. One young boy explaining 1 woman.  
 Is there any evidence of (change) provisions? Describe general atmosphere among the group.  
Confused, quiet, chilly. Not much meaning.  
 Is there any DISAGREEMENT among participants? ... observations? About what?  
Not really. One joke is wonderful.

**Language Use Attitudes**  
 Regarding USE OF VERBAL/CULAR as the community express any of the following?  
 enthusiasm smiles, nodding, animated tone of voice, lots of talking, positive statements  
 reluctance to explicitly show their feelings thoughtful expressions, quiet, looking at speaker, few comments  
 disinterest in the discussion side conversations, people leaving group, lack of eye contact with speaker, atmosphere too relaxed  
 embarrassment nervous laughter, head shaking, side conversations, negative statements  
 disappointment solemn atmosphere, head shaking, negative tone of voice, negative statements  
 mixed feelings mixed body language, mixed tones of voice, positive and negative statements  
 other?

Regarding USE OF OTHER LANGUAGES as the community express any of the above?  
 later disagreement about how much Kou/TP mama used w/ children. Appt prompted the conversation.

**Critique of Tool**  
 What worked well?  
make a 2-way arrow to use!  
 What didn't work well?

**Conclusion / Q&A Session**  
 How does the community respond to the conclusion? Circle all that apply, adding any relevant notes.  
 (circle listening) (circle nodding) (circle smiling) (circle shaking heads) (circle frowns) (circle conversation) (circle deep thinking) (circle other?)

List questions asked by the community. Who asked them?

**Speeches**  
 Does anybody make a "speech"? If so...  
 What? one man stands up or beginning explaining general situation

Community response? agreement

## Data Sheet

Wheel of Community Data  
 Data recorder: North Cady Facilitator: Devin O'Banion Date: 13-Oct-2017

Village: Danab  
 Vernacular: Kou  
 Language Key:

T = Tok Pisin  
 K = Kou

**FATHERS**  
 mothers, old men, old women, children, young men, young women

**MOTHERS**  
 F, T, M, CH, YW, YM, OW

**OLD MEN**

**YOUNG MEN**


for any relevant comments on language use (e.g. amount of use, domains), mark on the relevant parts of the diagrams above and then detail the comments

side affirmed the use of TP can between older adults.  
 Discussion was lead by the fathers with a little input from 1 older woman.  
 Young mothers use more TP. Older mothers use more Kou

## + Field Notebooks

# OTHER FACTORS IN ASSESSING VITALITY

## Landweer's Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (for PNG)

- Relative position on remote-urban continuum
  - Domains of use
  - Frequency and type of code-switching
  - Population and group dynamics
  - Distribution of speakers within their own social network
  - Social outlook regarding and within the speech community
  - Language prestige
  - Access to stable/acceptable economic base
- 

# HOW IT WORKS: TRIANGULATION

It's important to also:

- conduct interviews,
- make detailed observations
- listen to the peoples' history
- ask about their hopes for the future

Remember:

- Vitality may not be the same in every village
- Habits of language use may differ between households of the same village
- Many factors influence language use choices *and what is reported to researchers*

# BENEFITS OF THE WHEEL OF VITALITY?



# **BENEFITS OF THE WHEEL OF VITALITY**

**Raises a community's self-awareness of their own language use habits**

**Sparks valuable discussion among community members about their language choices and motivations**

**Provides an opportunity to encourage local communities that the survival of their language is in their hands**

**Can rapidly assess language vitality for proper representation in the academic world**

**Informs development strategies for NGOs and other agencies seeking to serve and preserve local language communities and their unique cultures**



# **QUESTIONS?**

**Demonstration Available Later**

