

PIDGIN PREVALENCE
DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL LINGUA
SURVIVABILITY - THE ALEKANO-
GAHUKU LANGUAGE CASE OF
GOROKA TOWN MARGIN AREAS

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INTRODUCTION

- The prevalence of pidgin is steadily contributing to the demise of traditional language, not only in PNG but also in other parts of the world. Most of the world's languages are considered to be vulnerable, which means they are likely to disappear in the future.
- The Alekano language spoken by more than 20 000 people in Eastern Highlands is highly vulnerable and is in danger of dying out. Alekano language is likely to disappear because it has been shifting; literally meaning it has not been successfully passed to children amid the ascendancy of pidgin as dominant language.

CONT..

- Although demise of language is a trend throughout the world and is a concern among linguists, what matters is the preservation of language, as the death of language will signify death of culture.
- This paper provides a brief insight into the prevalence of pidgin and its impact on Alekano language and also offers ways in which the language can be preserved and passed onto the future generation.

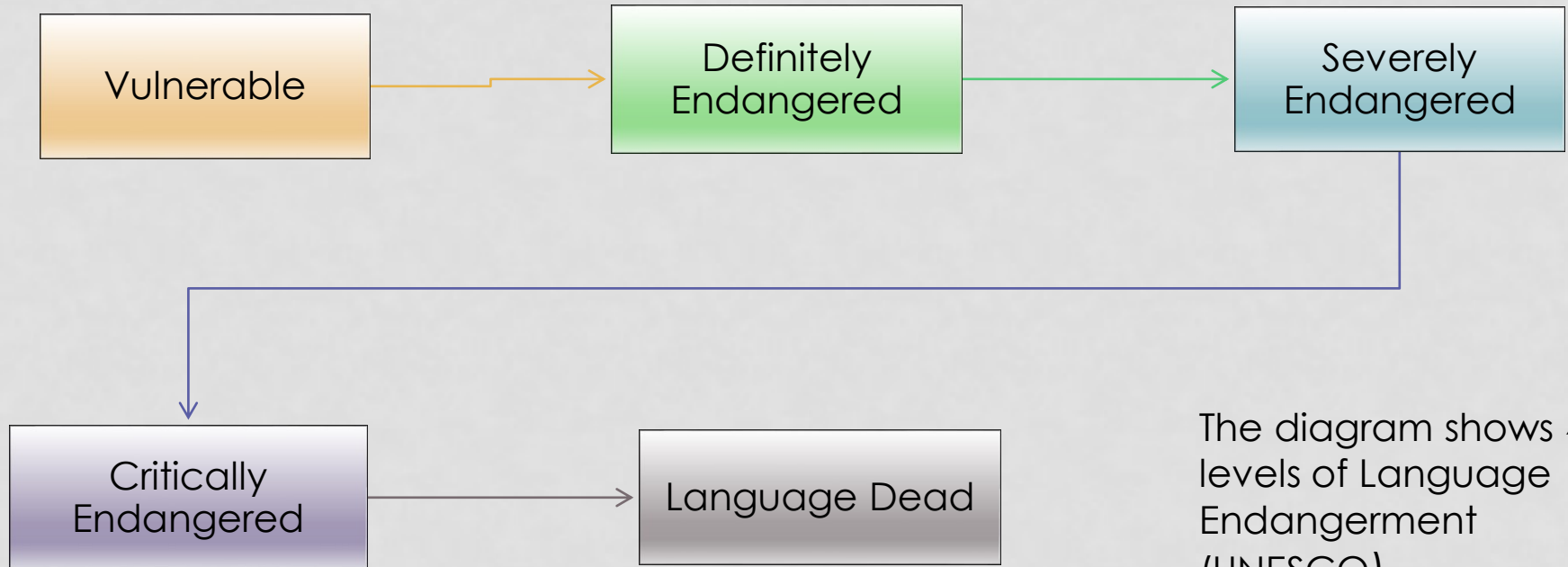
RESEARCH QUESTION

- The nature of questions used in the research includes those that attempt to allow research respondents to provide data or information based on their experiences growing up within the linguistic area.
- How they see and contemplate the future of Alekano in future, demonstrate understanding on factors that inhibit Alekano and subsequently those that allows for pidgin explosion.
- What it means to them in terms of cultural inspirations that is drawn from the uses of language and also the questions that allows them to offer practical approach in preserving the language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- According to ethnologue classification, Alekano language spoken in Eastern Highlands is sifting (Jackson, 2013).
- According to David Chiang (Ibid) 25 0000 people speak Alekano (2013) but this figure is steadily declining as speakers die without passing the language or are simply sifting to pidgin and to some extent English.
- Although there are cross-cutting issues responsible, chief among those is globalization and Neo colonialism, where the economically powerful languages dominate others (Graddol, 1997).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The diagram shows 4 levels of Language Endangerment (UNESCO)

METHODOLOGY

- The research method used in this research is qualitative, mainly unstructured interviews and group discussions.
- The aim of this qualitative research is to develop insight into declining use of Alekano language.
- The questionnaire used in the research is structured to gather opinion from the participants.
- The interviews and group discussions are either transcribed on note books or recorded on smart phone. I also observe and listen to normal daily conversations of Alekano language speakers on load side, while commuting to and from work on PMV's and also observe and listen to family conversations. The research data is dissected, analyzed and presented as research finding.

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SAMPLING AND SAMPLING METHOD

- The sampling method used in this research is Judgment Method, which means the entire sample is drawn from a single village.
- In this case, the area is Kefamo a village located five miles west from Goroka town. In choosing Kefamo as sample I am absolutely certain the findings are representative of the Alekano speaking populations of Goroka town margin villages.
- The sample size is 30, of which 15 are woman and 25 men. Most of the sample are young people (male and female) born in the 1990's. Few samples also include grandparents and parents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

- According to the research it is unanimously revealed Alekano will go into disuse in generation or two because of the prevalence of pidgin and English as medium of instruction.
- All research participants contend that there will be a point in time Alekano will disappear completely, unless Alekano speakers make effort to maintain and preserve the language.
- The following are what research participants revealed which, they say will contribute to the demise of Alekano usage in daily conversation, whilst on the other hand they also point out factors that spiral pidgin usage.

INCREASING AND WIDESPREAD USE OF PIDGIN



- Respondents revealed that Pidgin is now a medium of communication; it is spoken in homes, with friends within the linguistic bounds.
- Pidgin is the official lingua franca of Papua New Guinea and is spoken by estimated three quarter of the million populations the country (Siegel n.d).
- Pidgin is spoken widely in urban centers of the country, young people born in the 1990;s and later learn and speak pidgin as their first language.
- (S.Gitene personal communication, 5 may 2015) revealed that Alekano is now limited to certain domains because locals are interacting daily with settlers and tenants in pidgin more and also with their family.

CROSS MARRIAGE

- Cross marriage occurs when Alekano speakers (male or female) is married into another linguistic group or culture.
- In such marriage arrangement the mode of communication will be the most dominant language understood by both.
- In most mix marriage families pidgin is frequently used.
- According to the research children in mix parentage learn and speak pidgin.

MUNICIPAL INFLUENCE

- According most research participants, Alekano language is likely to disappear in the future because it is continuously challenge by the municipal influence.
- that because of the influence of urbanization, young generations who will be the custodians of Alekano language have lost touch.
- A study by Coastal Carolina University and Memorial University of Newfoundland revealed that the influence of urbanization on language change is obvious, while features and norms emerge in dialects of young speakers.
- The notion that one could easily be label as backward, in speaking the language (Ples Man) inhibits learning process and the ability of young people to speak the language.
- the shift of allegiance from traditional language to Pidgin is not a surprise for those who spent most of their time in town; this is further aided by urban-rural continuum.

MIGRATION

- Migration and its impact on Alekano work either way. Firstly, when Alekano speakers migrate to non Alekano speaking area, the language goes with them and remains dormant.
- Another case is intermixing with other language speakers, where pidgin is used widely.
- Global Language Viability paper (B.F. Grimes 2000) found that migration outside of traditional area causes decline in language.
- Migration from outside into Alekano dialectical fold has been closely related to land sale around the margin village of Goroka (Alekano speaking Villages)
- Daily conversation in linguistically diffused neighborhood is always pidgin; the number of Alekano speakers has declined over the years and the trend is continuing

DOMINANT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

- Respondents contend that pidgin is now a dominant language; because of the widespread use of pidgin Alekano is rapidly losing its significance.
- Parents push children to learn prestige language because they perceive economic and educational advantage of children talking in second language.
- According to the Linguistic ethnologue Alekano is shifting, which means parents are not successfully passing the language to their children. The trend now is that Alekano is spoken intermittently and is only restricted to certain domains.
- the world's speech is increasingly homogenized, meaning the most common language is on the lips of half of the world's people (WWI n.d.).

CONCLUSION

- Many traditional languages are vulnerable and are on the verge of disappearing. In PNG the fringe languages of major towns and cities are most threatened because of the presence of robust municipal influence.
- Alekano language is shifting at an alarming rate, young people born in the 1990's and later hardly speak the mother tongue or rather seldom speak it.
- Yet, a striking scenario is that the current Alekano speaking generation would be the last.

PARTICIPANTS PROPOSAL

- Language (Alekano) must be spoken in homes, this is the most important domain where language can be taught, learned and transmitted.
- Since all young people are shifting to pidgin there is a need for tok ples skul, where the language can be systematically taught.
- . Importantly young people must make an effort to learn, they have the responsibility to learn and to speak it.

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