

2011 Activity Report

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1. Research themes

I have conducted research in the following four areas focusing primarily on the San (bushmen) living in southern Africa who are known as hunter-gatherers: (1) caregiver-child interactions, (2) The system of subsistence activity, demographic structure, and caregiver-child interactions; (3) the perception of the environment; (4) the transformation of ethnicity. In addition, integrating these aspects, I aim to clarify the cultural structure that organizes social interactions of the San people. The purpose of my 2011 overseas dispatch was to collect and analyze further data related to this research and to deepen my theoretical understanding of the above themes from the perspective of comprehensive communications research.

2. Dispatch details

(1) Dispatch to the United States and Austria (April 9 to September 30, 2011)

Getting a sabbatical from ASAFAS, I could spend the majority of the period from April 9 to September 30, 2011, in residence and conducting research at the Center for Language, Interaction, and Culture (CLIC) located in the University of California Los Angeles campus (UCLA). In addition, during this period, I traveled to Japan on June 25 and 26, and to Austria between July 10 and 14, where I organized my research materials and delivered presentations at international symposia.

As a continuation from the previous year, at CLIC, I held the position of visiting scholar and engaged in collaborative research under the theme of “Linguistic anthropological study of responsibility formation in early caregiver-child interaction.” Specifically, I attended seminars hosted by the various professors belonging to the CLIC and delivered three presentations of my own. In addition, starting at July 2012, together with the graduate students and visiting scholars affiliated with CLIC, I voluntarily organized a research seminar on comprehensive communication, in which we met (for the most part) on a weekly basis and participants took turns presenting data from their own research. Furthermore, I availed myself of the abundant

literature and other resources possessed by UCLA and also continued in my efforts to collect data with respect to caregiver-child interactions of families of Japanese descent currently living in Los Angeles.

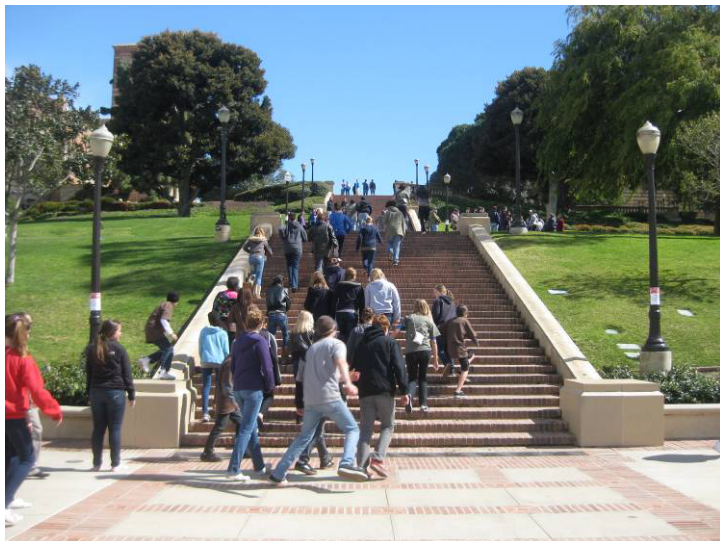


Photo 1 UCLA campus

In Japan, I reviewed the collection/organization of documents that I had assembled in the United States and documents related to ongoing collaborative research with other Japanese researchers (in both cases, video materials on caregiver-child interactions); the video data was backed up and shared. In addition, I participated in an international symposium titled, “Reconsidering ‘communicative competence’: Findings and suggestions from fieldwork/empirical research,” hosted by Kansai University and delivered a presentation titled, “Sensing action sediments: Some features of directive sequences in Japanese caregiver-child interactions.”

In Austria, I attended an international symposium on the “Hunter-gatherer legacy of Khoisan-speaking peoples: in memory of Hans Den Besten (1948-2010),” hosted at the Haus Bergkranz (seminar house belonging to the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt) and delivered a presentation titled “Surname and inter-ethnic relationships of the Ekoka !Xun.” This international symposium, a meeting of researchers of Khoisan language and culture from around the world, is held regularly and is an opportunity for scholars to engage in focused discussion over a period of five days on the topic of Khoisan research. This marked the third time that I attended the symposium. Through this symposium, I was able to reaffirm the position of my own research in relation to the latest trends in Khoisan research and to gain much useful insight from researchers sharing my research interests.



Photo 2 Presentation at the international symposium “The hunter-gatherer legacy of Khoisan-speaking peoples: in memory of Hans den Besten (1948-2010)”

The above research activities were all undertaken during my sabbatical from my home institution (ASAFAS) and the subsequent holiday period. Although the sabbatical system is institutionalized, such a long-term overseas visit as described here would not be possible without the support and understanding of my colleagues and students under my supervision. For this, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude. I believe I was able to attend promptly to urgent business and to provide meticulous mentoring to my students even while abroad, thanks to modern communication technologies such as e-mail and VoIP phones. This experience reconfirms my faith in the utility of such means of communications in education and research.

(2) Dispatch to Botswana (November 14 to 24, 2011)

Between November 14 to 24, 2011, I visited the Gaborone and Maun campuses of the University of Botswana, where I met, respectively, with Dr. Herman Batibo to discuss research and collect materials related to comprehensive communication and Dr. Cornelis Vanderpost to discuss research and collect materials related to human-environment interactions. In my meeting with Dr. Herman Batibo, whose specialty is the linguistics of African languages, I was able to gain valuable insight into the position of my research topics on Khoisan languages and cultures, in the context of recent trends in linguistic research and to have a productive discussion with regard to future research collaborations. Dr. Cornelis Vanderpost’s specialty is geography, and the Maun campus of the University of Botswana with which he is affiliated boasts numerous experts in physical geography, human geography, ecology, plant taxonomy on its faculty and is equipped with large-scale natural science laboratories. In my meeting with these various specialists, we were able to discuss the relationship between the environmental characteristics of the Kalahari Desert and the lifestyle of the San (!Gui, !Gana, !Xun, etc.), who are the subject of

my research, and to talk about promoting collaborative research using GIS data currently being generated on the Maun campus and a wide range of existing data, including that related to plant taxonomy possessed by Dr. Vanderpost and his colleagues.



Photo 3 University of Botswana (Gaborone campus)

(3) Dispatch to Botswana and United States (February 13 to March 8, 2012)

Between February 13 and March 8, 2012, I conducted field research in New Xade village, Botswana and met with Dr. Herman Batibo and other researchers on the Gaborone campus of the University of Botswana to discuss research and collect materials related to comprehensive communication. Also during this period, I visited the United States between February 21 and 25 to discuss research and to deliver a presentation at an international symposium.

I have continued to conduct field research in New Xade village in the approximately 15 years since the time of my graduate studies. In the current field survey, I was able to exchange ideas with local NGOs, government agencies, and local administrators of international agencies regarding possible future collaborations.



Photo 4 A scene from field research in New Xade village

I was able to have more detailed discussions with Dr. Herman Batibo and other researchers regarding the most recent trends in surveys/research in Botswana and potential future research collaborations. In addition, I invited Dr. Batibo to be a guest speaker/participant at the international symposium to be hosted by the Young Researcher Overseas Visits Program for Vitalizing Brain Circulation, which is currently being planned for March, 2013 in Japan, to which he readily gave his consent.

In the United States, I attended an international symposium on “Social learning and gender relations in hunter-gatherer childhood” held in the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, where I delivered a presentation titled, “Shaping intimate relationships: developmental transition in caregiving activities for young children among the !Xun of north-central Namibia.” In addition to introducing field data related to the socialization and education/learning of hunter-gatherers from around the world (including the San people of southern Africa, the Pygmies of west and central Africa, and the Aborigines of Australia), symposium panelists provided a roadmap for comparing the socialization and education/learning of hunter-gatherers from a broader perspective.

3. Particularly noteworthy professional and personal experiences during my dispatch

During my long stay at CLIC, I was able to engage in more extensive and deeper scholarly

exchanges with many researchers outside the confines of classes and seminars set in the formal curriculum. In particular, It affords me a weekend amusement to take an early morning hike to the nearby mountains with Dr. Charles Goodwin, who served as my research host, and his partner, Dr. Marjorie H. Goodwin, who herself is an outstanding researcher at CLIC, after which we would take part in a breakfast social hosted by the couple and their friends. Through these hikes and breakfast socials, I was able to become acquainted with not only researchers but lawyers, musicians, people from the movie industry, and so on, and experience a refreshing and lively exchange of ideas that could not be had with academic scholars alone.

In contrast to the above experience, in the research meeting on comprehensive communication that we decided to host on a voluntary basis, I was able to share with other researchers my interest in communication research. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to discuss works- and ideas-in-progress as well as problems encountered in the course of research (which we tend to avoid talking about in a formal seminars, etc.) with researchers who are actively conducting research of their own and writing manuscripts related to the topic.

At the international symposium held in Austria, novice researchers and leading authorities active in Khoisan research from around the world gathered in a seminar house belonging to the Goethe University Frankfurt nestled in the majestic natural setting of the Alps, and engaged in highly-specialized discussion on Khoisan research from morning to night, as the participants ate and slept under the same roof. It was truly an experience that could not be had at other conferences, and I had the distinct feeling that I was in a place where research history was being made.

In Botswana, I visited New Xade village, where I have been conducting research for approximately 15 years, since my time in graduate school. New Xade village was established in 1997 as part of the Botswanan government's strategy to promote development of the San people. The background leading to the village's establishment and the subsequent interactions between the villagers and various organizations are the subject of much discussion. During the current dispatch I deeply moved by the fact that the children who had been born immediately after settlement of the villagers (the children that I had observed for my "baby" research) were now young adults and were actively involved in the running of the village and otherwise engaged in social activities.

4. Achievement of research objectives and areas needing improvement

At CLIC, I participated in the official curriculum, with the Discourse-lab seminar," put on irregularly by Dr. Charles Goodwin, and the weekly "Ling-Lab Seminar" organized primarily

by Dr. Elinor Ochs, Dr. Alessandro Duranti, Dr. Charles Goodwin, and Dr. Marjorie H. Goodwin serving as focal points. I had several opportunities to present my own research in both of these seminars. In the summer, where there were fewer official curricular events, we organized (on a voluntary basis) a comprehensive communication research meeting, where participants would present their own data for discussion. Through these opportunities, I believe that I have, for the most part, achieved the goals and overcome the challenges identified in last year's report (to narrow the focus of my activities and to deepen my exploration therein).

In Botswana, I proactively visited New Xade village, local NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations, with "The Encyclopedia of the |Gui and ||Gana Culture and Society" (written and edited by myself and other Japanese San researchers) and various English-language papers that I had authored in hand. Through these efforts, I was able to achieve the goal set last year of expanding my social network with various organizations and individuals.

In addition, in Botswana, I was able to get my hands on a copy of the book "Tears for My Land" (2010), written by an activist from New Xade, who also happens to be an acquaintance of mine. This book represents the first ever book written by a member of the |Gui (one of the San groups that I have studied over the years) and, as such, will likely prove to be an invaluable resource in conducting research and in advancing collaboration with various local organizations. Given the brevity of my dispatch, I was unable to speak directly with the author, but hope to do so on a future dispatch.

5. Challenges and objectives for the 2012 dispatch

In 2012, I am planning to conduct collaborative field work in Botswana and to continue moving forward with the output workshops. The challenge will be to strengthen linkages with the local communities, NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations that I visited in 2011, and to create reciprocal relationships with these institutions and individuals.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the social network that has developed as a result of my visits to the United States and elsewhere as part of this project, it will be important to broadcast the results of these current research activities to a worldwide audience. To this end, in 2012, I intend to attend and deliver presentations at various international conferences and international symposia in fields relevant to my research.

In addition, as one of the final outcomes of this project, we are planning to host an international symposium in March, 2013, in Kyoto, with the Young Researchers who were dispatched overseas taking the lead. We have already received a positive response from Dr. Herman Batibo regarding his participation in the conference as an invited guest. In 2012, it will

be necessary to work closely with the other Young Researchers and to organize, through much trial and error, a fruitful and successful symposium.