

On-site Education of practical Languages for Area Studies

Report in 2009

—Baka, Yaoundé University 1, Cameroon, 19 Jul. 2009 – 13 Nov. 2009—

Year of enrollment:2009

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

Koji Sonoda

On my research

The purpose of this study is to clarify how the egalitarian concept has been maintained by Baka Pygmies in Cameroon in terms of ‘the body techniques’. It is said that African hunter-gatherers have egalitarian concept in which people have the system of sharing that distributes material goods and foods. To maintain this system, the specific body techniques will be needed. This study draw egalitarian concept as the concept in which expressing the feeling of demand is prohibited on their distribution. Gesture and posture is more important rather than word in our communication. I focused on the body techniques on their communication because it seems to be taken by people unconsciously.

Language training

For this program, we took the class in Université de Yaoundé 1 which is located on Yaoundé city in Cameroon. The class was about the linguistic characteristics of African languages. The text of *introduction to African linguistics* was used. The class gave us a number of examples concerning the prefix which attaches to subject and noun, denial, and time tense, etc.

The following is a brief explanation of what is good in the class.

First of all, we learned how to pronounce the phonetic signs, that relates to all of languages such as English, French, and African languages. This time was for a review hour for pronunciations.

Since African languages have very difficult pronunciations that Japanese don't use, it is important to study this for us.

Secondly, it seems that African languages put the most emphasis on the intonation. The same thing can be said for Baka languages. Even though you say the word “*ma*”, the meaning varies greatly, depending on the intonation. It means “I” “the medicine” or “the rain” in this language.

Therefore, it is important that these words are repeated again and again, if you want to be a good speaker. We have to chase our teacher repeating what he said. And we could do that during the class because the class is private lessons.

This is the reason why we can have a sense of achievement. The class can help your ears keep sharp.

Unfortunately, we didn't deal with Baka language which is needed for my research.

So, we had the opportunity to go to the village where Baka Pygmies lives.

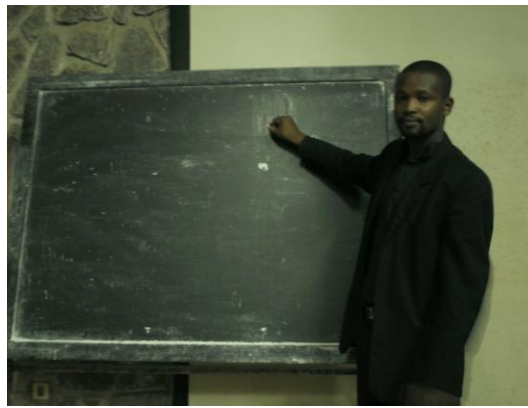
In that village, I continued to make a point of communicating with them. At the beginning of arrive, all of my saying was hello, but I could hold a conversation in Baka language a little bit after that. We can say that the experience of the class can support our research.



Baka children in our village



A class room in Yaoundé University 1



a lecturer in Yaoundé University 1