Dialects of the Iduna Language

Joyce Huckett.

DIALECTS OF THE IDUNA LANGUAGE

by Joyce Huckett

There are nine dialects of Iduna of which the Central dialect comprises four political wards (census divisions). The other dialects except for Goyala comprise one single ward each. (Goyala is spoken in a mountain area and is combined into one ward with villages on the coast who speak the Diodio language.) The Iduna people refer to their language as <u>bonada</u> 'our (inc.) talk.' The usage of two words, <u>ayoma</u> 'yes/true!' and <u>aliye</u> 'bring' determine in their eyes the villages/ dialects that are part of <u>bonada</u>. The original map titled "Dialects of the Vivigani Language"[1] prepared by David Lithgow and Philip Staalsen of the Summer Institute of Linguistics did not include Upper Wataluma as a dialect of Iduna.
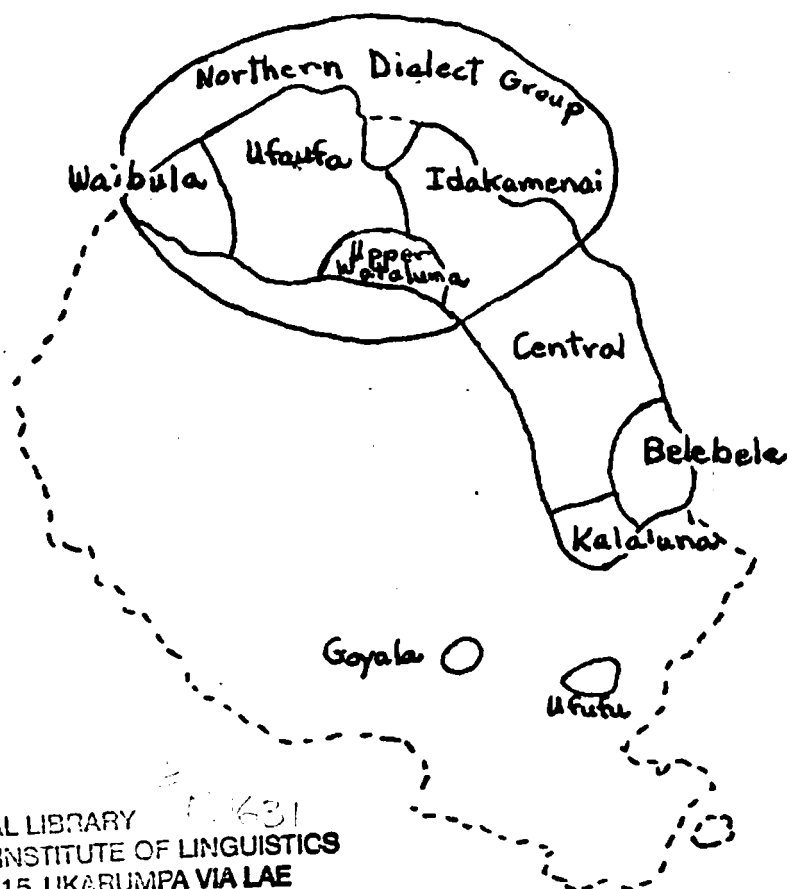
The orthography is based on the usage of the Central dialect where we have been working in the village/ ward of Wakonai. Except for the Central dialect, ward lines were drawn on dialect boundaries. There are no dialect variations within the villages of the four wards of the Central dialect. The population of the Central dialect (2152) far exceeds any other single dialect and also exceeds the combined total of the Northern dialect group (1598) Population figures are based on the September 1979 census.

A) 1 <u>Central</u>

Kalimutabutabu	829
Eweli	474
Vivigana	446
Wakonai	<u>403</u>
total	2152

B) 2 Ufufu 786

3 Goyala 300

C) <u>Northern Dialect Group</u>

4	Ufaufa	614
5	Upper Wataluma	470
6	Idakamenai	387
7	Waibula	<u>127</u>
	total	1598

D) 8 Kala'uma 568

9 Belebele <u>464</u>

5868

The dialects are grouped according to how close they are linguistically to the Central dialect. Group B though more distant geographyically are closest linguistically. Group C, the Northern

Dialect Group in turn is the next closest. Group D though geographically the closest show more diversity linguistically. The decisions on these linguistic affinities were not based on the 1964 language survey cognate[2] percentages but on the following:

1) comparison of word lists

2) the judgment of one language helper who has

   a) relatives by marriage in several of the dialects

   b) travelled extensively through the dialect areas when he was working for the Agriculture Department and making patrols around the island.

   c) been elected as Councillor for Wakonai (Jan. 1981) and has regular contact with the other Councillors representing each dialect.

No word list was obtainable from Waibula (127 speakers of whom 20 are away from the island) as their Councillor did not come to the meeting when word lists were being taken and the area is round the other side of the island inaccessible to us.

Differences

The variants are listed in the order of frequency. Those underlined only have 1 or 2 examples. The figure under each variant indicates the number of dialects in which it occurs. One dialect (Kala'una) has no h. One dialect (Idakamenai) had one example each of n $\rightarrow$ /l/, /d/.

1) Phonemic variants among dialects are as follows:

k $\rightarrow$ /g/
$\quad$ 1

g $\rightarrow$ /y/, /ɸ/, /'/, /h/, /w/
$\quad\quad$ 4 $\quad$ 4 $\quad$ 4 $\quad$ 2 $\quad$ 1

$' \rightarrow /\underset{3}{g}/, /\underset{1}{k}/, /\underset{1}{y}/$

$w \rightarrow /\underset{2}{kw}/$

$h \rightarrow /\underset{1}{\emptyset}/, /\underset{1}{y}/, /\underset{1}{g}/$

One non-phonemic variant:

$s \rightarrow /\underset{3}{t}/$ (only one example in one of the 3 dialects which uses
s elsewhere.)

2) There are differences in stress and length in spoken form
which do not affect the orthography.

3) Word lists showed relatively few lexical differences. There is
some shift in meaning of a few words.

bwatana 'fringe,edge' (Central)

bwatana 'short'   (Upper Wataluma)

o'olina 'hard, firm' (Central)

o'olina 'dry'   (Ufaufa)

Mutual Intelligibility

1) All informants were questioned as to mutual intelligibility
between their dialect and the Central dialect in their communities
and all were strongly positive in their answers. (No statistical
testing has been done as I do not think it warrants time and
strength.) I also asked how well the scriptures in Iduna were
understood and being used and againe the response was positive and
the desire expressed for more books to be sent.

The Belebele informant is a local preacher and told us how
much better he had been able to understand the scriptures and
that he was able to preach better sermons since obtaining Iduna
Luke and John as his understanding of Dobu is limited. It was

good to hear him refer to Iduna as 'our talk'. This is in contrast
to one report in 1977 or 1978 from a Belebele man that they wanted
to have the New Testament in Bwaidoka - the church language used
by United Church and Catholics on Goodenough and closely related
to Iduna - rather than Iduna.

Book selling tours to these other dialects/ villages have
been made by our helpers from time to time. The fact of mutual
intelligibility was confirmed by the 12 man translation committee
representing each centre of the central dialect. They also report
inquiries from these areas regarding when the New Testament will
be available and desire to be able to obtain copies. One purpose
of the work with the translation committee is to select words that
are more commonly known throughout the language, where choice is
possible. This has mainly been geared to central dialect usage,
but in cases where Bwaidoka words have passed into common usage
in Iduna, we have favoured the choice of those words as they are
more likely to be understood and/ or used by the other dialects.

2) There is considerable intermarriage between the villages of
the central dialec, on the one hand and the villages of the other
dialects on the other, some favouring one and others favouring
others e.g.

    Eweli with Kala'una, Belebele, Ufufu, Goyala

    Wakonai with Kala'una, Belebele, Goyala but not Ufufu

    Vivigana with Belebele and Ufufu, but not Kala'una or Goyala

    Wakonai and Vivigana to a limited degree with the Northern

       dialect group

> Kalimutabutabu spreads over a wide geographical area and
> extends its connections both north and south.

3) The dance seasons of the Spear and Drum moieties - still going
strong in the '60s but in decline since the early 70s due to local
government council ban on them - also facilitated mutual intelli-
gibility between dialects. Dance seasons initiated by villages of
the central dialect were attended over the months of the season
by Belebele, Kala'una and Idakamenai. Each dance season was
climaxed oy an aidaba 'a huge feast and food and pig distribution'
and for this people from Ufufu, Goyala, Upper Wataluma, and
Ufaufa attended.

Conclusion

In summary, all dialects of Iduna use the same and no additional
symbols of the alphabet as are being used in the orthography of
the central dialect with the exception of /h/ which is missing
from the Kala'una dialect. The other dialects of Iduna are
mutually intelligible with the central dialect and there has been
wide acceptance of and interest in the Iduna scriptures which use
the central dialect. Therefore, we feel that the present ortho-
graphy fits the language and that there will be no need for
changes in the future.

Footnotes

[1] Lithgow, David and Philip Staalsen. Languages of the D'Entrecasteaux
     Islands. "Dialects of the Vivigani Language". Department of
     Information and Extension Services, Port Moresby. 1965.

[2] A native speaker of the Dobu Language was used as an interpreter
     in 1964 and some loss of accuracy in arriving at cognate counts

Note: rotated handwritten linguistic comparison chart; reading is uncertain.

Central	Up. Watalumu	Iwakumai	Kaliana	Belebele
g	no g- proto y-...	no g- proto	no g- proto	no g- proto
giyuna 66	yiuna	yiuna	y yiuna	y /iuna
yagoyagona 113	yaʼoyaʼona	proyaona	proyaona	proyaona
matamatagona 115	matamataʼina	matamataina	matamataina	matamataina
tunagona 118	tunuʼina	tunuʼina	tunuʼina	tunuʼina
dayagona 66	dayavana	dayayona	S dayayana	dayayana
h	h → ø 1 ex.	h → g	h→g ø 2ex / h→g 4ex	
hakwaʼadi 121	akwaʼadi	gakwaʼadi	y yakwaʼadi N/C	y yakwaʼadi
iphalamanana 147	S ex g-	S ex g-	S ex g-	S ex g-
hmana 74	S	S	mana	S
lakihina 21	S	S	lakaina	lagahina
k				k → g 17 ex
lakahina 21	S	S	lakaina	lagahina
yaluʼeta 13	aluʼeta	S	yaluʼeta	yaluketa
aliʼau 25	S	N/C	aliau	kalikau
S (sub-phoneme variant)	S	S→t 3 ex / t→s 1 ex	1 → ø 1 ex.	· → k 2 ex
saʼeyana 49	taʼeyana	tuʼyana	S	S
aseʼasena 59	ateʼatena	ateʼatena	ateʼatena	N/C
malabata 106	—	malabasu	—	S

S = Same   N/C = Non-Cognate   o   o   o   o   o

Phonemic variants of the dialects of the Iduna language

Ufaufa has one word showing g → ' and one of g → ∅ (and one of
s → t sub-phonemically) in words cognate with those of other
dialects showing more examples. (See separate chart.)

	Central		Ufaufa + Idakamenai	Up. Wataluma
g → '	nima'uguna	56	nima'u'una	N/C
g → ∅	galu'eta	13	alu'eta	alu'eta
(s → t	ase'asena	59	ate'atena	ate'atena)

Idakamenai has two variants and Up. Wataluma has one variant of
metathesis between g and a preceding vowel and then inserted a
y following the vowel. In the second example in Up. Wataluma
it would seem that the same process occurred, with subsequent
deletion of the g. Goyala has two variants of ' → h in these
same words (note inital glottal is not written).

Central		Idakamenai	Up. Wataluma	Goyala
egana	77	geyana	geyana	hegana
igana	85	giyana	iyana	higana

On the printed Request for Established Orthography form Sec. 2
Dialect Differences random variants are underlined and could be
deleted. The following list gives the examples of the random
variants.

	Central			
g → h	gufa	37	hufa	Up. Wataluma + Idakamenai
k → t	siko	62	sito	Up. Wataluma + Idakamenai
n → l	gimununa	157	imuluna	Idakamenai
n → d	o'eni	163	o'edi	Idakamenai
g → w	nigona	28	niwona	Belebele
w → kw	wehi	36	kwehi	Up. Wataluma
			kwei	Kala'una