Language Ideologies and Orthographic Development for Than Öwîngeh Tewa

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Research Questions
• What are the factors motivating a resistance to or acceptance of the use of writing to represent the heritage language at Than Öwîngeh?
• If community members have agreed to use writing to represent the heritage language, what factors motivate the decision to use one such system (e.g., alphabet, syllabary) over another?
• If a particular writing system has been agreed upon, what are the factors that motivate sound/concept-symbol correspondences?

Confidentiality
Pseudonyms are used for most Tewa-speaking communities as well as for all Tewa consultants.

Pueblos
• Than Öwîngeh
• K'au Öwîngeh
• Okhuwa Öwîngeh
• P'ae Öwîngeh
• Makówa Öwîngeh
• Ohkay Öwîngeh

Consultants
• Ogowee T'ún
• Póví Kwuyo
• Múusa Kwee
• Kó'ôe Chaenu

Language Ideologies
• “… any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979:193)
• “… ingrained, unquestioned beliefs about the way the world is, the way it should be, and the way it has to be with respect to language” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2005: 9)
• “… the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989: 255)

Kinds of Language Ideologies
• Syncretism: involves “a value on linguistic borrowing from neighboring languages” (Kroskrity 2009: 192)
• Utilitarianism: The view that language represents a communicative tool, de-emphasizing its sociocultural and emotional import (Kroskrity 2009: 192-4)
• Variationism: The view that dialectal variation, usually based on individual and family differences, is the expected norm (Kroskrity 2009)

Than Öwîngeh
• One of 19 federally recognized Pueblos in New Mexico
• Located about 20 miles north of Santa Fe, NM
• One of 6 Tewa-speaking Pueblos in NM
• 640 tribal members (internal records, 2006)

Photograph by Ogowee T’ün, 2001
Than Ówîngeh Tewa

- Than Ówîngeh remaining (~1000 Tewa speakers remaining)
- Agglutinative morphology
- Extensive noun incorporation
- Unmarked SOV word order
- Complex Pronominal Verbal Prefix System

Kiowa-Tanoan family, with a focus on Rio Grande Tewa (based on Speirs 1966)

Than Ówîngeh Tewa (cont’d)

Photographic contrast
- Tone (high, falling, low)
  - p’î‘é ‘moon/month’
  - p’ôe ‘road’
  - p’öe ‘water’
- Long vs. short vowels
  - sá ‘feces’
  - sá̆a ‘skunk’

Than Ówîngeh Language Program

- Began in 2003 with language survey
- Received Tribal Permission in 2004
- Received NSF-NEH grant in 2005
- TOLP led by 4 women, assisted by UNMers
- Program Goals
  - Developing class materials and curricula
  - Constructing an online database
  - Producing interactive media
  - Creating a dictionary of Than Ówîngeh Tewa

On the Resistance to Writing

5 factors give rise to a general resistance to the use of writing to represent the heritage language. They involve views of writing as:

- Removing the spirit of the spoken language
- Undermining traditional norms of information acquisition
- Allowing for the appropriation of the heritage language by outsiders
- Inhibiting the language learning process
- Posing a logistical problem

Writing viewed as a “centrifugal force” (Bakhtin 1981)

On the Acceptance of Writing

4 factors give rise to a general acceptance of the use of writing to represent the heritage language. They involve views of writing as:

- Aiding in the preservation of the language
- Facilitating the language learning process
- Increasing domains of use for the language
- Enhancing the legitimacy of the language

Writing viewed as a “centripetal force” (Bakhtin 1981)
San Juan Tewa Dictionary

TOLP members decided to employ the orthography used in the San Juan Pueblo Tewa Dictionary as the basis for the Than Owingeh Tewa orthography:

- Published by the San Juan Pueblo Bilingual Program, led by Esther Martinez, in 1983
- The first known Tewa dictionary of its time, with an extensive lexicon of Tewa forms
- Serves as the foundation for the forthcoming Than Owingeh Tewa Dictionary

Sound-Symbol Correspondences

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<tr>
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Note: Ohkay Owingeh sounds are notated both in the Ohkay Owingeh and Than Owingeh orthographies

Guiding Principles

The development of the Than Owingeh orthography was founded on 3 principles (see Grenoble & Whaley 2006):

- Learnability: any and every strategy should be employed to facilitate the reading (decoding) process
- Transparency: orthographic conventions should coincide with those of the language of broader use
- Acceptability: orthography must be acceptable to all stakeholders (requires establishing “prior ideological clarification” [Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998: 63])

Syncretism in the Use of the Than Owingeh Orthography

- The use of an alphabetic writing system
- The use of the Latin script
- Left-to-right, top-down orientation of the written text
- Borrowing of formal features (paragraph indentations, line spacing)
- Notions of “word”-iness
- Spelling conventions borrowed from English
- Surface-level features borrowed from English (e.g., punctuation)

Utilitarianism in the Use of the Than Owingeh Tewa Orthography

- The use of the orthography should only serve to supplement, not replace, the spoken language
- Students in Tewa class encouraged to use written Tewa for their own purposes
- Students in Tewa class encouraged to write Tewa how they want
Variationism in the Use of the Than Òwîngeh Tewa Orthography

- Inclusion/exclusion of graphemes based not only on technical considerations but on aesthetic ones (i.e., the need for the Than Òwîngeh to look different). For example, [’] vs [ʔ]
- Students in Tewa class encouraged to write Tewa how they want
- In the dictionary, variant entries will be included to reflect variant forms within Than Òwîngeh Tewa.

Summary

- Factors motivating a resistance to the use of writing can be viewed as centrifugal, whereas factors motivating an acceptance of the use of writing can be viewed as centripetal
- The principles of learnability, transparency, and acceptability guided the TOLP’s decision to use an alphabetic writing system and to establish the particular sound-symbol correspondences in the Than Òwîngeh orthography
- The language ideologies of syncretism, utilitarianism, and variationism served to underlie these principles

References