Awetí Language Documentation Project

The Awetí Project participated in the DOBES-programme from November 2000 until March 2006, under the responsibility of Prof. Dr. Hans-Heinrich Lieb and with Sebastian Drude as its principal researcher and Sabine Reiter as a second researcher. The project worked in close co-operation with two other DOBES-projects on Kuikuro and Trumai, situated in the same geographic and cultural area.

Although all the children born in the major villages still acquire Awetí as their first language, young people, which form the lion’s share of the population, are particularly open-minded to Brazilian language and culture which is reinforced by mass media (television / radio broadcast). One consequence of this is the decreasing interest in learning the rich oral literature, still known by very few older specifically trained story-tellers. Preservation of the latter precious tradition is most important to the Awetí, thus much data of this type was collected.

A fair and respectful cooperation between the Aweti and the documentation team was of utmost importance for the project. Thus, in 2003 the chief Yakumin was invited to Europe in order to provide a better understanding of the project’s institutional background and working procedures.

During the project, the researchers have started to train the two Awetí teachers and other young men and women to record audio and video data in order to continue the documentation on their own in the future, and to write their language, also to help with the time consuming data-transcription.

Awards

Project data obtained and processed

DOBES. In most cases there is an audio and a video file of the same session. Due to better sound quality transcriptions were made from audio files. In general, there will not be any transcription of cultural data, except for ritualized speech at certain recurrent events.

CONTACT ADDRESS

Sebastian Drude
The Language Archive, MPI
P.O. Box 310
6500 AH Nijmegen – The Netherlands
Sebastian.Drude@mpi.nl