Action Research in Endangered Language Communities

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As the UNESCO's *Atlas of the languages in danger* shows, all the languages in Ryukyu islands are at the risk of disappearing. Researchers have engaged in describing the comprehensive grammar of them from the 2000s and it is time to apply the knowledge to revitalize the languages. However, researchers usually do activities for language revitalization outside of formal research in Japan and not enough has been done to share empirical knowledge, or to build theoretical and methodological frameworks for LR.

The purpose of my presentation is to show that action research is a promising approach to language revitalization and examine some activities of the Language Revitalization Port Project using AR.

Action research can be distinguished from traditional "scientific studies" in terms of (1) being highly conscious of researchers own beliefs and biases in research design and motivated by researcher's belief; (2) aiming to solve social problems and promoting real social change; (3) seeking a theory which suits specific situations and localized settings rather than universal contexts. In action research, researchers are expected to be "facilitator" to solve problems and collaborate with "stakeholders" in a community.

Our projects, including creation of picture books, activities in elementary schools, several series of workshops, developing language materials and organizing classrooms of regional languages, aim to motivate local people to get interested in their traditional language and promote their own activities forward. I will show some fruitful results of our projects as well as some difficulties or failures we faced while carrying them out.

Though only successful cases tend to be shared in language revitalization studies, in order to realize the conservation of languages in as many places as possible, we should describe and share the whole process of projects, their effects, failures, and revisions so that other scholars can examine, get predictive knowledge and inspiration from it.