Linguists, community members, and designers:
Why do we collaborate for language revitalization?

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In our project, we have been creating language materials collaborating with the language community members. In doing so we make use of the linguistic data that the linguists obtained from the language community. We design the language materials with visual elements like illustrations so that they are accessible and stimulating for the community members. This is in a sense a way to return the linguistic data back to the language community. I propose that the aspects that a designer and an illustrator can add, namely the aspects of graphic design and visual communication, are crucial for the linguistic data to be easily accessible for the language community. We as a team believe that these are fundamentally necessary for a study of endangered languages if we care about language revitalization, because it cannot be done without active involvement of the language community members. I will discuss the details of the features of the graphic design and the visual communication in my presentation.

We have created and designed four multi-lingual picture book packages (picture book, audio file, and linguistic explanation) and several language products for four Ryukyuan Languages so far. They are designed to activate the children's (Japanese mono-lingual) and their parents' (mostly passive speakers of Japanese the local language) interest in the local language and to support them (re)learning the local language. The language materials are also intended to be a useful tool for the community members' activities such as a reading group, class room organization, or various modes of communication with the fluent speakers. In my presentation, I will have a mini-exhibition of our language materials so that other language revitalization projects can take advantage of them.