

December 3, 2013 Update:

HOPE is currently hosting Documenting Ramari Hatohobei, Peter and Barbara Black's research project which is funded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP), which is part of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project.

The goal of Peter and Barbara's project is to provide a resource base of well documented Tobian language use. This resource base will consist of video records of people speaking the language in various contexts and covering various topics. The project has received funding for one year, running from October 2013 to September 2014. The project is organized around three visits to Palau to gather data.

HOPE is providing support services for this work, both administrative and logistical. HOPE is managing the 10,000 British Pounds (about \$14,000) grant, reimbursing the Blacks for authorized expenditures. HOPE also is helping with arrangements for accommodation and transportation and providing office space for them. At the conclusion of this project, the equipment and supplies purchased with ELDP grant funds will become the property of HOPE.

This project really began in September 2013 when Barbara and Peter traveled to London for an eight-day ELDP workshop in language documentation at the School of Oriental and African Studies, part of the University of London. This training was focused on how to make high-quality video records of speech and then how to use several different programs of linguistic software to add transcriptions, translations, and contextual data to those records. Upon returning to Far Haparim, their home in Hawaii, Barbara was able to begin using this software to process a video of Mrs. Felicisma Andrew reading a Tobi language poem. Sisma had visited Far Haparim earlier in 2013 and with the help of her granddaughter, Felicia Andrew, had translated the poem from English into Tobian.

Peter arrived in Palau in late October to begin the first data gathering trip and Barbara arrived two weeks later. They departed on November 20. With the exception of several days lost to Typhoon Haiyan and then illness, the trip was quite productive. Fifteen speakers were filmed, discussing a number of different topics and telling several very interesting stories. The ongoing Bible translation project provided a rewarding context for the production of linguistic material.

Many people offered advice and assistance. Fellow researchers with interests in Ramari Hatohobei, David Tibbetts and Esther van den Berg, agreed to share materials. Especially important was the offer by four people, Paulina Theodore, Nixon Andrew, Cheryl Patris, and Sharon Patris, to film videos while Peter and Barbara are absent from Palau. They were each given information about the use of the recording equipment and the guidelines for producing linguistically useful video material. HOPE will manage the equipment for this part of the project and will ensure that the material collected by these volunteers is sent to Far Haparim for annotation and transcription. Cheryl undertook to develop illustrations for three Tobian stories, already translated, that can be formatted

for use with children. These stories will be prepared for distribution to the community later in the project year.

Peter and Barbara's second research trip to Palau will be in May of 2014. During this trip, they will continue to work with members of the Tobian community to gather Tobian language in a variety of contexts and covering a variety of subjects, including humorous stories and anecdotes. They will put a priority on time spent with older members of the community.

The third and final research trip supported by the ELDP grant will most likely take place in September 2014. Barbara and Peter will attempt to gather as much Tobian language material as possible during this time. And no doubt there will be much work remaining to be done—including filling in gaps and clarifying confusions. The three children's stories will be distributed to community members. If time permits, songs will be collected.

A planned outcome of this project is a Tobian language dictionary—available online and in paper—which will include images and audio clips. The dictionary will include material collected during this project year and material collected over the years by Peter and Barbara.

The ELDP grant is designed to support what is called language documentation. The idea is to provide carefully documented linguistic material to serve as a resource for the future. The major outcome of this project will be a body of annotated, transcribed, and translated videos of Tobian speakers. Copies of this material will be placed in several archives, in Palau and overseas, and will be available to people interested in Ramari Hatohobei.



Barbara Black, Nixon Andrew, Peter Black.
12 November 2013, Malakal, Palau.
Photograph by David Tibbetts.